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Abbreviations

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AFT	Agenda for Transformation
AU	African Union
BCR	Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EVD	Ebola virus disease
GOL	Government of Liberia
HRPS	Human Rights and Protection Section, United Nations Mission in Liberia
HRU	Human Rights Unit, Ministry of Justice
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LNP	Liberia National Police
LRC	Law Reform Commission
MICAT	Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection
MOHSW	Ministry of Health & Social Welfare[1]
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
NAC	National AIDS Commission
NCD	National Commission on Disabilities
NEC	National Elections Commission

[1] As of 2016, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has been shortened to "Ministry of Health."

NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
NUOD	National Union of Organizations for the Disabled
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PWD	Person(s) with disabilities
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMEER	United Nations Mission on the Emergency Ebola Response
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

I. Introduction

1. The Republic of Liberia is pleased to present this Common Core Document, which has been prepared in accordance with the harmonized guidelines issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in May 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/3). The Republic of Liberia is committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and appreciates this opportunity to take a significant step toward meeting its international human rights treaty reporting obligations.

2. This Common Core Document is the product of a collaborative effort spanning multiple sectors in Liberia. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) coordinated the data collection and drafting processes. The document was circulated widely among partners in government and civil society in October 2015. A final consultation was held on 28 October 2015 with representatives of key government ministries and agencies, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), and civil society organizations. The final document reflects the contributions of all participants. The Human Rights and Protection Section (HRPS) of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) provided technical support to the Government of Liberia throughout the data collection, drafting, and validation processes.

II. General information about Liberia

A. Demographic, economic, social, and cultural characteristics

1. Geography and Climate

3. Founded in 1847, the Republic of Liberia is the oldest independent republic in Africa. Liberia is located in West Africa close to the Equator (between latitudes 4°N and 8°N) and comprises a landmass of approximately 37,420 square miles (96,917 square kilometres).[1] It is bordered on the west by the Republic of Sierra Leone, on the north by the Republic of Guinea, on the east by the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea together form the Mano River Union.[2]

4. The climate of the northern regions of Liberia is tropical, while portions of the southern regions have an equatorial climate. Most of Liberia experiences two distinct seasons: the dry season, lasting from December to April, and the rainy season, which extends from May to November. Dry, dusty winds known as the Harmattan occasionally arrive from the Sahara between November and March. The southern equatorial regions of

[1] REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, AGENDA FOR TRANSFORMATION: STEPS TOWARDS LIBERIA RISING 2030, at 19 (2013) [hereinafter "AFT"]; LIBERIA INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS AND GEO-INFORMATION SERVICES [LISGIS], 2008 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS, FINAL RESULTS 10 (May 2009), *available at* http://www.lisgis.net/page_info.php?A7d5144532c86,48986d89e12e44eb820 (May 6, *last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015) [hereinafter "LISGIS CENSUS"].

[2] The Mano River Union is an intergovernmental organization whose purpose is "to strengthen the capacity of Member States to integrate their economies and coordinate development programs in the areas of peacebuilding, as a prerequisite to any development, trade promotion, development of industry, energy, agriculture, natural resources, transport and telecommunications, monetary and financial affairs in short, all aspects of economic and social life of the Member States." See http://www.manoriverunion.int/ (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

Liberia experience rainfall throughout the year.[4] Liberia has one of the highest rates of rainfall in the world at an average annual rate of 4,000 mm.[5] Due to the poor state of many roads, some parts of the country become extremely difficult to access during the rainy season, when roads may become impassable or are washed out.

5. Liberia's climate supports mangrove forests along its Atlantic coastline, which extends for approximately 350 miles and is home to some of the country's largest cities, including Monrovia, Buchanan, Harper, and Robertsport. Dense rainforest, accounting for approximately forty-five per cent of Liberia's landmass, covers much of the interior and provides significant timber resources. Mountainous plateaus account for approximately twenty-seven per cent of the land and are the source of a number of other natural resources, including iron ore, diamonds, and gold.[6]

6. Liberia is divided into fifteen administrative districts known as "counties."[7] The counties, in turn, are divided into 136 districts,[8] which are further subdivided into clans.[9] The capital city of Monrovia, by far the most populous city in Liberia, is the seat of government and functions as the country's economic, social, political, and cultural hub.

2. History

7. **Early history.** Prior to the fifteenth century, Liberia was sparsely populated, due, historians believe, to climatic and geographic challenges (which include Liberia's dense rainforest, mountainous plateaus, heavy rainfall, and the prevalence of mosquito-borne illnesses). While the region has been inhabited since at least 600 B.C., the largest wave of migration to what is now Liberia occurred following the dissolution of the Sudanic empires in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Indigenous tribes belonging to the Kwa, Mande, and Mel linguistic groups, among others, settled in the area and established a series of clan-states with organized political and socio-economic structures. Domestic slavery was a common practice in these societies and often formed part of their systems of governance. Another common feature among these clan-states was the establishment of secret societies, the Poro (for men) and the Sande (for women), which exist to this day and operate what are known as "bush schools" for the initiation of youth into adulthood. By the second half of the fifteenth century, Liberia's indigenous clan-states also began to engage in trade with Europeans, who came to the West African coast in search of rice, gold, and slaves, but did not establish any permanent settlements in the area.[10]

8. **Founding of the Republic of Liberia.** In 1822, the American Colonization Society (ACS) founded the settlement of "Liberia" as an outpost for freed slaves and their descendants from the United States, where some abolitionists considered a return to Africa

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[4] UNDP Climate Change Country Profiles: Liberia, *available at* http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/climate/projects/undp-cp/UNDP_reports/Liberia/Liberia_hires.report.pdf (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

[5] Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Country Situational Analysis Report 5 (July 2011), *available at* http://www.moh.gov.lr/documents/Country%20Situational%20Analysis%20Report.pdf (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

[6] ACT, *supra* note 2, at 15.

[7] The fifteen counties of Liberia are: Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Lofa, Margibi, Maryland, Montserrado, Nimba, River Cess, River Gee, and Sinoe.

[8] LISGIS (2008), *supra* note 2, at 12-15 (Table 6: Population by County, District, and Sex).

[9] Rep. Liber. Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism (MICAT), "About the Republic of Liberia – Counties and Districts," http://www.micatliberia.com/index.php/home/republic-of-liberia/about-liberia/84-about-the-republic-of-liberia.html?showall=&start=3 (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

[10] Rep. Liber., Truth and Reconciliation Commission, [TRC], Consolidated Final Report, Vol. 1 at Two, 94-97 (2009) [hereinafter "TRC Final Report"].

as a solution to the problem of slavery, many Americans, including President James Monroe (after whom Monrovia is named) also believed there was no place in society for free people of color and supported the settlement in Liberia as a means of avoiding the issue of integration.[7] The ACS acquired land primarily by force from the local chiefdoms, imposing a settler's rule guided by a "civilizing" and Christianizing mission, and continued to send free African Americans to Liberia until 1838. Recaptives—Africans on board slave ships bound for North America but intercepted en route by the U.S. navy[8]—were also sent to Liberia. The descendants of these settlers and recaptives became known as "Americo-Liberians" or "Congo people."[9] This period laid the foundation for the ensuing conflict and contention between the indigenous and Americo-Liberian peoples: while the latter group comprised less than five per cent of the population, they adopted a colonialist philosophy in their interactions with the indigenous Liberians (who comprised at least ninety-five per cent of the population) and would go on to maintain economic, social, and political control of the country until the 1980 coup d'état.[10]

9. The Republic of Liberia was founded on July 26, 1847, when the country declared its independence, and was governed until 1980 under one-party rule by the Americo-Liberian True Whig Party.[11] The national seal of Liberia, featuring a ship nearing shore with the motto, "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here," reflects the heavy influence these settlers have had on the course of Liberian history. Political and economic power was then, as now, heavily concentrated in the capital city of Monrovia. Law and policy systematically discriminated against the indigenous population for more than a century: the 1847 Constitution, for instance, limited voting rights to land owners (thereby excluding indigenous Liberians, who owned land communally, in accordance with customary law)[12] and the Hinterland Regulations, adopted in 1949, codified the two-tiered system of justice for "civilized" and "native" persons.[13]

10. **Twentieth century history and 1980 coup.** The central government in Monrovia continued to expand the nation's territory until the twentieth century, when Liberia's map took its current shape. However, while the physical and political state of Liberia may have become consolidated during this time, it came at the cost of national disunity. Indigenous leaders and political dissidents were often subject to repression and retaliation. William V.S. Tubman, Liberia's longest-serving president, introduced measures to unify Liberians,

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[7] *See generally* JAMES CHRISTY, ANOTHER AFRICA: THE STORY OF LIBERIA AND THE FORMER SLAVES WHO RULED IT (Hill & Wang, 2014); Peter Dennis, Int'l Ctr. Transitional Justice, Briefing Paper, "A Brief History of Liberia," (May 2006), *available at* http://ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Liberia-Brief-History-2006-English.pdf (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

[8] An 1807 Act of Congress prohibited the importation of new slaves into the U.S. Though it was largely unenforced, a number of U.S. naval ships joined British counterparts in the "blockade of Africa" to intercept slave ships violating this prohibition. *See, e.g.*, DONALD CANNY, AFRICA SQUADRON: THE U.S. NAVY AND THE SLAVE TRADE, 1842-1861 (Potomac Books, Inc., 2006); ADAM HOCHSCHILD, BURY THE CHAINS: PROPHETS AND REBELS IN THE FIGHT TO FREE AN EMPIRE'S SLAVES (Mariner Books, 2006).

[9] *N.B.* The term "Americo-Liberians" is the term most commonly used in contemporary Liberia and will be employed in all future references to this demographic in this document.

[10] TRC FINAL REPORT, *supra* note 10, at 99-107; Dennis, *supra* note 11, at 1.

[11] Dennis, *supra* note 11.

[12] TRC FINAL REPORT, *supra* note 10, at 110-11.

[13] Revised Rules and Regulations Governing the Hinterland of Liberia (Jan. 7, 2001), *available at* http://landwise.landesa.org/record/309 [hereinafter "Hinterland Regulations"]. The Hinterland Regulations underwent revision in 2001. *See also* TRC FINAL REPORT, *supra* note 10, at 400 (recommending that the Government of Liberia replace these national symbols with symbols more representative of the Liberian population as a whole).

including adoption of universal adult suffrage in 1946. However, his regime was an authoritarian one and characterized by political brutality.[7] By the 1970s, tensions between the majority indigenous population and the Americo-Liberian power elite began to boil over. Tubman's successor, William R. Tolbert, attempted to implement a number of reforms, but a decision to raise the price of imported rice led to the so-called "rice riots" of April 1979. At a time when less than four per cent of the population owned nearly sixty per cent of the nation's wealth, the proposed tax on rice – a staple of the Liberian diet – was met with public protest. On April 14, 1979, government security forces, armed with a "shoot-to-kill" order, were deployed throughout Monrovia to suppress the riot and fired on crowds of mostly unarmed civilians, resulting in several hundred casualties. While the government's response brought an end to the rice riots, tensions remained high, and the stability and credibility of Tolbert's administration were irreparably damaged.[8]

11. On April 12, 1980, a military coup d'état, led by Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), toppled Tolbert's administration. Doe's forces invaded the Executive Mansion and assassinated President Tolbert. Ten days later, thirteen high-ranking members of Tolbert's administration, including the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, were summarily and publicly executed on the orders of Doe's "People's Redemption Council."[9] Dozens of prominent Americo-Liberians were jailed and had their property confiscated, and the 1847 Constitution was suspended.[10] Doe was subsequently installed as the first non-Americo-Liberian President of Liberia, a position he would hold until 1990.[11]

12. **Assassination of President Doe and the Liberian Civil Wars (1989-1997, 1999-2003).** Doe's administration was hardly less authoritarian than that of his predecessors and was characterized by corruption, political intolerance, and human rights violations. Amid ongoing rumors of coups, Doe executed a number of political rivals. As his administration's stability waned, a struggle for power emerged, culminating on December 24, 1989, when Charles Taylor led a group of rebel fighters, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), into the country from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire, plunging Liberia into a period of civil conflict that would last for fourteen years.[12] Throughout 1990, Taylor's forces advanced towards Monrovia, brutalizing the civilian population as they did so.[13] By July of that year, the NPFL had laid siege to the city. At around the same time, a splinter force, led by Prince Y. Johnson, broke with Taylor's forces to form the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). In September 1990, the INPFL captured Doe as he was visiting the headquarters of ECOMOG,[14] a multilateral peacekeeping force deployed to Liberia under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Johnson and his INPFL troops subsequently tortured and killed Doe. An ECOWAS-backed Interim Government of National Unity failed to restore the peace, and as fighting continued, more factions emerged. By 1995, there were seven factions in conflict with one another, and the country was engaged in a full-scale civil war.[15]

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[7] TRC Final Report, *supra* note 10, at 116-19.
[8] TRC Final Report, *supra* note 10, at 133-35.
[9] Dennis, *supra* note 11, at 1-2.
[10] The current Constitution of Liberia was adopted in 1986 and replaced the 1847 Constitution.
[11] TRC Final Report, *supra* note 10, at 44.
[12] TRC Final Report, *supra* note 10, at 143-46; Dennis, *supra* note 11, at 3-5.
[13] TRC Final Report, *supra* note 10, at 154.
[14] ECOMOG, or the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, was comprised primarily of soldiers from Nigeria.
[15] Dennis, *supra* note 11, at 3-4. The seven factions were the NPFL, the NPFL Central Revolutionary Council (NPFL-CRC), the Lofa Defense Force (LDF), two factions of the United Liberation

13. Despite the cease-fire agreement reached under the Abuja Accords in September 1995, war continued apace. In July 1997, elections were held in accordance with the timetable laid out by the Abuja Accords. Taylor was elected to the presidency with seventy-five per cent of the vote; it is widely believed that many Liberians voted for him to avoid the violent consequences anticipated in the event of his loss.[7] During this time, Taylor was also supporting the civil conflict in Sierra Leone. His actions in Liberia and Sierra Leone led the UN to impose sanctions on Taylor and several members of his administration.[8] Domestic opposition to Taylor remained strong, and the peace that followed the 1997 elections was transitory. War broke out again in 1999; by the following year, the opposition forces of Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) controlled nearly eighty per cent of the country and were engaged in armed conflict with the AFL for control of Monrovia.[9]

14. **Comprehensive Peace Agreement.** In 2003, with opposition forces closing in on Monrovia and demanding his ouster, Taylor agreed to participate in a peace summit sponsored by ECOWAS in Ghana. Pursuant to the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Taylor resigned from the presidency in August 2003 and went into exile in Nigeria.[10] Following his departure, an interim government was established with Gyude Bryant at its helm.[11] The CPA allocated positions in the National Transitional Government among the fighting factions, political parties, civil society, and counties, and set a timetable for national elections to be held in 2005. The CPA also made provision for a general amnesty for members of the warring parties; however it mandated the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to address issues of impunity.[12] Additionally, the CPA provided for the establishment of a Good Governance Commission and an Independent National Commission on Human Rights.[13]

15. Pursuant to the terms of the CPA,[14] in October 2003 the Security Council issued resolution 1509, establishing the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to monitor implementation of the CPA and assist in recovery and peacebuilding efforts.[15] UNMIL has maintained a continuous presence in Liberia since that time. As of 30 June 2015, the

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Movement for Democracy in Liberia, ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K, the Liberian Peace Council (LPC), and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).

[7] TRC FINAL REPORT, *supra* note 10, at 164. The Report notes that "Taylor literally threatened war if he were not elected president. . . . The fear of what Taylor might do if he were to lose the election apparently played a great role in consternating many to vote for him." *Id.*

[8] Dennis, *supra* note 11, at 4. The UN sanctions consisted of a ban on the importation of arms, a ban on trade in "blood diamonds," and a travel ban for Taylor and high-ranking members of his government and their immediate family members. *Id.*

[9] *Id.* A second rebel faction, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), splintered from LURD in 2003. *Id.*

[10] *Id.*; *see also* U.N. Sec. Council, Letter Dated 27 August 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council, U. N. Doc. S/2003/850 (Aug. 29, 2003) (containing the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement) [hereinafter "CPA"].

[11] CPA, *supra* note 30, art. 34 ("Amnesty"), states that the transitional government "shall give consideration to a recommendation for general amnesty to all persons and parties engaged or involved in military activities during the Liberian civil conflict . . . ." Art. 13 addresses the establishment of the TRC.

[12] *Id.*, arts. 12, 16. Both of these institutions have been established in the post-war years and will be dealt with in more depth in subsequent portions of this document.

[13] *Id.*, art. 33.

[14] U.N. Sec. Council Res. 1509, adopted Sept. 19, 2003, U.N. Doc. S/Res/1509 (2003); *see generally* United Nations Mission in Liberia, "UNMIL Facts and Figures," http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmil/facts.shtml (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

mission comprised 5,934 uniformed personnel (troops, military observers, and police) and 1,389 national and international civilian staff.[37] The Government of Liberia will assume all responsibility from UNMIL for maintaining peace and security in the country by 30 June 2016.[38]

16. **Accountability for violations of human rights and humanitarian law during the civil war.** The fourteen-year period of civil conflict (1989-2003) devastated Liberia. An estimated 250,000 people lost their lives (out of a pre-war population of approximately three million) and scores more were injured. One and a half million people were internally displaced or sought refuge in other countries. Scores of women and girls were subjected to sexual violence (according to one 2005 estimate, seventy-five per cent of Liberian women and girls were survivors of wartime rape).[39] Nearly 15,000 children were used as soldiers, some as young as six and seven, which contributed significantly to the destruction of the social fabric in Liberia. Critical infrastructure was also destroyed, and natural resources were plundered for personal gain.[40]

17. In accordance with the provisions of the CPA, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 2005 with a mandate "to promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation" through the investigation of human rights atrocities committed during the war.[41] The TRC found that "the nature and magnitude of atrocities committed, especially against women and children, by the various warring factions including government forces, were in epic proportions."[42] The TRC's final report, published in 2009, documented thousands of cases of atrocities and identified groups and individuals responsible for gross violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and domestic law. The report recommended, among other things, that those most responsible for these violations be subjected to criminal prosecution and/or be barred from holding political office. The Commission also recommended that reparations be paid to victims.[43]

18. In March 2006, Charles Taylor was extradited from Nigeria to face prosecution for his involvement in the conflict in Sierra Leone before the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in The Hague. In April 2012, Taylor was convicted on eleven counts of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity and sentenced to 50 years in prison; his conviction was upheld on appeal in 2013.[44] He is currently serving his sentence in the UK and has never been charged for any possible crimes committed in Liberia.

19. **2005 to present.** Liberia held its first post-conflict elections in 2005. The elections, for both presidential and legislative candidates, were considered to be free and fair by most local and international observers. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won the presidency with fifty-nine per cent of the vote, becoming the first female head of state to be elected in Africa. Sirleaf was re-elected to the presidency in 2011, and in the same year she was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Liberian peace and women's rights activist Leymah Gbowee. Liberian presidents are limited to two six-year terms of office; the next round of presidential elections will be held in 2017.

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[37] United Nations Mission in Liberia, "UNMIL Facts and Figures," *supra* note 34.

[38] U.N. Sec. Council Res. 2190, adopted Dec. 15, 2014, U.N. Doc. S/Res/2190 (2014).

[39] TRC CONSOLIDATED FINAL REPORT, VOLUME THREE, TITLE I, WOMEN AND THE CONFLICT 77.

[40] TRC FINAL REPORT, *supra* note 10, at 282.

[41] An Act to Establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, May 12, 2005, art. IV "Mandate of the Commission," ¶ 4, *available at* http://trcofliberia.org/about/trc-mandate.

[42] TRC FINAL REPORT, *supra* note 10, at 44.

[43] *See generally* TRC FINAL REPORT, *supra* note 10.

[44] Special Court for Sierra Leone, Appeals Chamber, Prosecutor Against Charles Ghankay Taylor (Case No. SCSL-03-01-A), *Judgment* (Sept. 26, 2013).

20. Following her inauguration in 2006, President Sirleaf launched an ambitious development agenda, drawing significant aid from international donors. In 2008, the Government of Liberia launched the First Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), which sought to lay the foundation for post-conflict recovery and development by outlining and achieving key objectives in the areas of peace and security, governance and the rule of law, economic revitalization, the rebuilding of critical infrastructure, and the provision of basic services.[39] In 2012, the PRS was succeeded by the Agenda for Transformation/Vision 2030: LIBERIA RISING, a global, comprehensive plan to transform Liberia into a middle-income economy by 2030. Also launched in 2012 was the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation (the "Reconciliation Roadmap"), which aims, by 2030, to build a sustainable peace by addressing and implementing some of the recommendations made by the TRC, focusing in particular on those recommendations that are most compatible with restorative justice. In 2013, Liberia marked ten years of peace, a significant milestone in the history of the country. Nonetheless, Liberia continues to face a number of challenges due to its post-conflict status, including corruption, a lack of public trust in the police and the judiciary, high unemployment, limited professional development and educational opportunities, inadequate resources to implement crucial human rights initiatives, and a fragile security situation.

21. **Ebola crisis.** In March 2014, Liberia confirmed its first cases of Ebola hemorrhagic fever. By July 2014, the Ebola outbreak had increased exponentially and plunged the nation into its greatest crisis since the civil war. President Sirleaf declared a ninety-day state of emergency in August 2014 and suspended fundamental rights under articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 24 of the Constitution. The government imposed a curfew, quarantines, and restrictions on movement in an effort to halt the spread of the disease. A quarantine of the West Point neighborhood led to violent clashes with government security forces, resulting in the shooting death of an unarmed teenager. Schools and universities were closed until March 2015. Senatorial elections, scheduled for October 2014, were postponed until December 2014. Trade diminished significantly, leading to inflation in the prices of many basic services and commodities. The health care system, already fragile prior to the Ebola crisis, crumbled under the overwhelming demands placed on it and suffered devastating losses in health care personnel (at least 180 of whom have succumbed to the disease thus far, as of May 2016). Additionally, Ebola survivors, health care personnel, and their families faced stigmatization and discrimination in the wake of the crisis. On 9 May 2015, Liberia was declared Ebola-free by the World Health Organization (WHO); however, it experienced three additional smaller outbreaks in July and November 2015 and March 2016. The cumulative total of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases in Liberia is at least 10,675 with at least 4,809 deaths.

3. Population and demographics

22. **National census.** Liberia's most recent census was conducted in 2008. It was the first national census undertaken since 1984, as the period of civil conflict prevented any further censuses from being completed in the intervening years. The Liberian Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), which conducted the 2008 census, assessed the national population at 3,476,608.[40]

23. **Population by county.** Montserrado County, where the capital city of Monrovia is located, is the smallest county in terms of landmass (1.9%), but is by far the most populous county in Liberia (population 1,118,241, or 32.2% of the national total), followed by Nimba

[39] AFT, *supra* note 2, at 3-4.
[40] LISGIS CENSUS, *supra* note 2, at 4.

(462,026), Bong (333,481), Lofa (276,863), Grand Bassa (221,693), and Margibi (209,923) counties.[42] These six most populous counties comprise 44% of Liberia's land area but contain 75.4% of the total national population. The three most populous counties (Montserrado, Nimba, and Bong) are home to 55% of the national population.

2008 Census Results, by County

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census

24. **Urbanization and population density.** Liberia's population is highly urbanized, with nearly half of all Liberians living in urban areas (48.7%). The capital, Monrovia, is home to more than one-quarter of the country's population (28%). Already historically home to a disproportionate share of the population, Monrovia has become even more heavily populated since the civil conflict of 1989-2003, when many Liberians fled from rural areas (where there was heavy fighting) to urban centers.[43] The population density of Montserrado County more than doubled between 1984 and 2008, increasing from 676 to 1,540 persons per square mile. As Monrovia offers significantly greater opportunities for employment and social amenities, many Liberians who migrated to the city during the war have not returned to the counties. It is anticipated that the trend toward urbanization will

[42] LISGIS Census, *supra* note 2, at 2-3; AFT, *supra* note 2, at 15.
[43] AFT, *supra* note 2, at 17.

Table 1
Distribution of Population by County, Area and Density (1984 and 2008)

Bomi	69,425	82,036	3.4	2.4	720	85	114
Bong	255,467	328,919	12.2	9.5	3,244	79	101
Gbarpolu	38,995	83,758	3.1	2.4	4,862	47	17
Grand Bassa	159,029	224,839	7.5	6.5	3,168	71	71
Grand Cape Mount	79,122	129,055	3.8	3.7	1,839	61	70
Grand Gedeh	67,028	125,258	3.2	3.6	4,106	53	31
Grand Kru	62,961	57,481	3.0	1.7	1,894	110	30
Lofa	199,747	276,863	9.5	8.0	3,984	72	70
Margibi	183,562	306,938	8.7	8.9	1,616	60	190
Maryland	89,267	136,436	4.2	3.9	897	65	152
Montserrado	491,078	1,118,421	23.3	32.3	526	44	2,126
Nimba	313,536	462,026	14.9	13.3	4,660	68	99
Rivercess	37,843	65,858	1.8	1.9	1,913	57	34
River Gee	39,782	66,788	1.9	1.9	1,873	59	36
Sinoe	64,147	94,547	3.1	2.7	4,770	67	20
National Total	**2,101,628**	**3,476,608**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**37,420**	**56**	**93**

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census (p. 11)

[23] Central Intelligence Agency [CIA]. The World Factbook. Liberia. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/li.html (last accessed Nov. 22, 2015) [hereinafter CIA World Factbook].

[24] The neighboring countries of Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire, for instance, have population densities of 177 and 143 persons per square mile, respectively. LISGIS (2008), *supra* note 2, at p. 10.

[25] LISGIS (2008), *supra* note 2, at p. 10-11.

26. **Age and sex ratios.** Liberia's population has a high ratio of children and youth: nearly 42% of the population is aged below 15 years, and more than 35% of the population is comprised of youth between the ages of 15 and 34.[7] In total, approximately 77% of Liberians are below the age of 35. The percentage of men and women is exactly even at the national level, and the country's national sex ratio is 100.2.

Table 2

Age Composition and Gender Distribution (2008)

Age cohort	Total number	% of total population	Number of males	Males as a %	Number of females	Females as a %
Persons aged below 15 years	1,458,072	41.9	736,834	50.5	721,238	49.5
Persons aged 15-24	718,625	20.7	351,358	48.9	367,267	51.1
Persons aged 25-34	511,401	14.7	248,532	48.6	263,158	51.4
Persons aged 35-64 years	670,113	19.3	345,951	51.6	324,350	48.4
Persons aged 65 years and over	118,397	3.4	57,470	48.7	60,641	51.3
Total	**3,476,608**	--	**1,739,945**	**50.0**	**1,736,663**	**50.0**

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census (at A1-4).

27. **Fertility and growth rates.** Liberia's current annual population growth rate is 2.1%. It is estimated that, if this trend continues, Liberia's population will double by the year 2041.[8] Liberia has a high fertility rate, with a national average of 5.8 children per woman. As reflected in the table below, however, there are significant disparities in fertility and mortality rates between urban and rural populations.

Table 3

Statistics on Birth, Death, and Literacy, by Urban and Rural Populations (2008)

	Fertility: TFR (2005-2010) (# of children per woman)	Population growth rate: annual (2004-2008)	Infant mortality rate (IMR) (# of deaths per 1000 births)	Under-5 Mortality rate (U5MR) (# of deaths per 1000 births)	Literacy rate: children	Literacy rate: adults	Total population
Liberia	5.8	2.1	78	890	119	55.9	3,476,608
Urban	4.9	--	68	686	95	70.4	1,633,824
Rural	6.5	--	84	1,057	125	50.9	1,842,889

Source: Republic of Liberia, Agenda for Transformation (at 17-18).

28. **Household size and distribution.** According to the 2008 census, the average household size in Liberia is 5.0 persons.[9] Household size in general is comparable in both

[7] *Id.* The Government of Liberia defines "youth" as ages 15-35.
[8] LISGIS CENSUS, *supra* note 2, at 4.
[9] *Id.* at 8.

rural (53.0) and urban (43.9) areas.[28] Female-headed households constitute 21% of all households in Liberia.[29]

29. **Dependency ratio.** The overall dependency ratio[30] is relatively high at 84. For urban households, this rate is slightly lower, at 74, but is higher in rural households, which have a dependency ratio of 95.[31] This is due principally to the high ratio of children under the age of 15 (who comprise nearly 42% of the population). The total percentage of dependants (defined as persons below the age of 15 and aged 65 and older) is 45.3% of the total population.

30. **National trends on birth and death over time.** Liberia has made significant progress over the past several years in reducing maternal, infant, and adult mortality rates. Between 2008 and 2012, the number of deaths of infants under one year of age was cut nearly in half, as was the number of deaths of children under five. Maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates have also been on the decline in the post-war years.[32]

Table 4
National Trends on Birth and Death (2009-2013)

Annual # of births (thousands)	149	154	157	160	162
Annual # of under-5 deaths (thousands)	16	15	12	11	10
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000)	112	101	78	75	71
Infant mortality rate, under-1 (per 1,000)	80	74	58	55	54
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	990	770	640	640	640
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	59	59	57	60	61
Fertility rate, total (# of births per woman)	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.8
Adolescent fertility rate (# of births per 1,000 women ages 15-19) (World Bank)	132	127	122	117	114

Source: UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2015 (2015); World Bank Development Indicators (December 2015).

4. Language, religion, and culture

31. **Language.** The official language of Liberia is English. Most Liberians speak a local dialect of English. Many Liberians also speak an indigenous language, of which there are more than 20.[33]

32. **Religion.** Liberia has a large Christian majority, which constitutes 85.6% of the population. There is a significant Muslim minority of 12.2%. Less than 1% of the population practices African traditional religions (0.6%) or other religions (0.2%); 1.5% of

[28] LISGIS, REPORT ON THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2010, at 14 (2011), *available at* http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/presentation/wcms_156366.pdf (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015) [hereinafter "LISGIS LABOUR FORCE SURVEY"].

[29] Defined as the number of dependents for every 100 persons of productive working age (aged 15-64).

[30] LISGIS LABOUR FORCE SURVEY, *supra* note 53, at 14.

[31] IRC USAID REPORT, *supra* note 10, at 13.

the population has no religious affiliation.[50] Freedom of religion is provided for in the Constitution.[51]

33. **Culture**. Liberia's population is comprised of at least 17 ethnic groups,[52] the largest of which are the Kpelle (20.3%), the Bassa (13.4%), the Grebo (10.0%), the Gio (8.0%), the Mano (7.9%), and the Kru (6%).[53] The Americo-Liberians have historically constituted less than 5% of the population.[54] In addition, there are significant Lebanese and Indian minorities, as well as several thousand expatriates from across the globe.[55] The Liberian Constitution limits citizenship, however, to persons who are "Negroes or of Negro descent."[56]

Table 5
Ethnic Affiliation (2008)

Ethnic Affiliation	Total Number	% of National Population
Bassa	466,477	13.4
Belle	26,516	0.8
Dei	11,783	0.3
Ghandi	105,250	3.0
Gio	276,923	8.0
Gola	152,925	4.4
Grebo	348,758	10.0
Kpelle	705,554	20.3
Kuwii	167,980	4.8
Krahn	139,085	4.0
Kru	209,963	6.0
Lorma	178,443	5.1
Mandingo	110,596	3.2
Mano	273,439	7.9
Mende	46,413	1.3
Sapo	43,327	1.2
Vai	140,251	4.0
Other Liberian	20,934	0.6
Other African	47,453	1.4
Non-African	4,508	0.1

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census (at 89-90).

[50] LISGIS (2016), *supra* note 2, at 85-86.
[51] Liber. Const. art. 14.
[52] Including the Americo-Liberian ethnic group.
[53] The Americo-Liberians are not included as a separate ethnic group in the 2008 LISGIS census. Therefore it is not possible to calculate their precise numbers.
[54] CIA World Factbook, *supra* note 47.
[55] Liber. Const. art. 27(b).

5. Economics and labor

34. **Overview.** Prior to its civil conflict, Liberia was on the threshold of becoming a middle-income economy. Between 1955 and 1975, the country experienced an average annual GDP growth rate of more than seven per cent, and by 1980, GDP per capita reached US$1,765,[50] a level it has not attained since, despite significant growth in the post-war years. Much of the Liberian population did not benefit during these years of growth, however, which was driven largely by exports in iron ore, rubber, and other commodities. Fewer than four per cent of Liberians owned nearly sixty per cent of the country's wealth, leading to significant income disparities and high levels of poverty—a major contributing factor to Liberia's subsequent civil unrest.[51] Following the 1980 coup, economic growth rapidly declined as foreign investment diminished. The civil wars of 1989-2003 devastated the economy. Critical infrastructure, particularly around Monrovia, was destroyed and has not been fully restored. Nonetheless, Liberia has seen steady economic growth following the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Between 2006 and 2010, for instance, GDP grew at an average annual rate of seven per cent, despite the fact that major export and investment activities were not functioning at pre-war levels.[52] As is reflected in the table below, between 2008 and 2013, the annual GDP growth rate was (with the exception of 2011) over ten per cent, and since 2008, GDP per capita nearly doubled. Future growth will be highly dependent on the careful and equitable management of Liberia's wealth of natural resources and the maintenance of peace and security in the country. At present, Liberia is considered a fragile state by OECD standards.[53]

Table 6
Trends in Economic Growth (2010-2014)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
GDP (in current US$)	1,292,697,080	1,545,400,000	1,753,828,494.7	1,936,500,000	2,027,000,000
GDP growth rate (annual %)	6.1	8.2	8.0	8.7	0.5
GDP per capita (current US$)	326.6	378.8	414.2	453.1	461.0
GNI, Atlas method (current US$)	991,314,491	1,320,785,057	1,508,153,235	1,606,704,595	1,641,098,423
GNI per capita, Atlas method (US$)	250	320	360	370	370
GNI, PPP (current int'l $)	2,330,843,144	2,747,378,537	2,994,214,780	3,063,497,340	3,088,978
GNI per capita, PPP (current int'l $)	590	670	710	710	700
Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)	7.3	8.5	6.8	7.6	9.8

Source: World Bank Development Indicators (December 2015).

35. **Agenda for Transformation.** In 2012, the Government of Liberia launched its "Agenda for Transformation" (AFT) as part of Liberia Rising: VISION 2030, with the aim of putting Liberia on course to achieving middle-income status by 2030. The AFT builds upon the foundations established by the earlier Lift Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2008-2011, which focused on the transition from emergency post-conflict reconstruction to economic recovery. The AFT is a broad, comprehensive national strategy comprising several major "pillars" that are foundational to sustainable development in Liberia, namely

[50] In purchasing power parity (PPP), constant terms.
[51] AFT, *supra* note 2, at 2.
[52] *Id.* at 2, 9.
[53] OECD, STATES OF FRAGILITY REPORT (2014), *available at* http://www.oecd.org/dac/governance-peace/conflictandfragility/sf.htm (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

peace, security, and the rule of law (Pillar I); economic transformation (Pillar II); human development (Pillar III); governance and public institutions (Pillar IV); and other cross-cutting issues bearing upon human rights, vulnerable groups, and issues of inequality (Pillar V). Implementation of the AFT will draw on all government ministries and agencies and will require long-term commitment and investment by domestic actors and international partners for its successful realization."[45]

36. **Development assistance and public debt.** Liberia has relied heavily on development assistance in the wake of its civil conflict. Between 2003 and 2012, Liberia received a total of US$5.1 billion in official development assistance (ODA) (earning it the rank of forty-ninth overall in terms of global ODA). In 2012, the country received a total of US$571 million in assistance, of which US$73 million was humanitarian assistance (making Liberia the twenty-ninth largest recipient of humanitarian assistance in 2012). In the same year, the three most significant donors of humanitarian assistance were the EU institutions ($19 million), the United States ($14 million) and Germany ($9.3 million). In 2014, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone created the Ebola Response Plan, a regional response to the Ebola crisis. The Plan requested U.S.$2.27 billion in humanitarian assistance between October 2014 and June 2015. To date, U.S.$1.56 billion of this has been funded.[46]

37. According to the most recent National Budget (Fiscal Year 2015/16), total debt service stands at $815,528,110, of which $284,103,443 is domestic and $531,424,667 is external.[47] Liberia completed the most indebted nations relief program in 2010 and received debt relief totaling more than US$4.6 billion, thereby reducing its public debt by more than ninety per cent and to approximately fifteen per cent of GDP.[48]

Table 7

Indicators on Development Assistance and Public Debt (2009-2013)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Net ODA received (current US$)	512,570,000	1,417,010,000	764,840,000	570,970,000	534,226,000
Net ODA received (% of GNI)	50.7	127.3	53.8	36.1	32.5
Net ODA received per capita (current US$)	134	358	187	136	124
External debt stocks, total (DOD, current US$)	1,850,282,000	418,852,000	448,431,000	487,147,000	541,530,000
Central government debt, total (% of GDP)	....	....	0.5	0.4	....
Total debt service (% of exports of goods, services and primary incomes)	2.7	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.3

Source: World Bank Development Indicators (December 2015).

[45] *See generally* AFT, *supra* note 2.

[46] Financial Tracking Service, "Ebola Virus Outbreak – West Africa – April 2014," https://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=emerg-emergencyDetails&emergID=16506 (*last accessed* Dec. 8, 2015).

[47] MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, FISCAL YEAR 2014-15 NATIONAL BUDGET, GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA 384 (2014) [hereinafter "NATIONAL BUDGET"].

[48] International Monetary Fund [IMF], *Liberia Wins $4.6 Billion in Debt Relief from IMF, World Bank*, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2010/car062910a.htm (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

38. **Natural resources and agriculture**. Liberia is home to significant natural resources that are key to its current and future economic growth. At present, the mainstays of the Liberian economy are mining, agriculture, and trade. Liberia is endowed with rich mineral deposits including iron ore, diamonds, and gold. It has also begun oil exploration. Liberia has rich timber resources, as nearly 45 per cent of the country (more than 42,000 square kilometers) is covered in rain forest.[71] There is some risk of deforestation, however, due to large agricultural and timber concession agreements.

39. Historically, the benefits of these resources have not been equitably distributed among the Liberian people. The 1986 Constitution provides that "[t]he Republic shall, consistent with the principles of individual freedom and social justice enshrined in the Constitution, manage the national economy and the natural resources of Liberia in such manner as shall ensure the maximum feasible participation of Liberian citizens, under conditions of equality as to advance the general welfare of the Liberian people and the economic development of Liberia."[72] The country has taken a concrete step to implement this constitutional provision through the establishment of the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), created by an Act of Legislature in 2009 to help ensure that the country's natural resources are verifiably paid and accounted for and that they are utilized to the benefit of all Liberians on an equitable and sustainable basis.[73] Liberia has also been a participant in the Kimberley Process since 2007.[74]

40. Agriculture is the primary source of employment in Liberia.[75] Agricultural products include rubber, coffee, cocoa, bee, cassava, palm oil, palm kernel, sugarcane, banana, plantains, livestock, and poultry. Liberia also has very rich marine resources.[76] The country's agricultural potential is very high, though this potential is not being fully exploited: only five per cent of the land is currently under permanent cultivation and less than one per cent is under irrigation. A number of large agricultural concessions, such as the Firestone rubber and Golden Veroleum palm oil plantations, have achieved significant output from the land and constitute a large share of the farming economy in Liberia. Smallholder farming, however, is limited by factors including a lack of access to credit, farming machinery, fertilizer, and food processing facilities, and poor transport infrastructure. Insecurity of land tenure has also deterred some Liberians from pursuing agriculture. As a result, less than half the population today is "food-secured" and relies heavily on foreign food markets (up to two-thirds of food in Liberia is imported). As of 2010, forty-one per cent of the population's food intake was considered to be below acceptable levels.[77]

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[71] ALT, *supra* note 2, at 15.

[72] Liber. Const., art. 7.

[73] An Act to Establish the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), approved July 10, 2009, at § 3.1.

[74] *See* Kimberley Process, http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/en/liberia (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

[75] ALT, *supra* note 2, at 15.

[76] *Id.* at 76-77. *N.B.* Many records to private land ownership were destroyed during the war. Additionally, Liberia has operated historically under a dual legal framework, using both common law and customary law systems. Under common law, land is held in fee simple and other private means of ownership, but under customary law, land is held communally; this has caused conflict in claims over who owns land in much of Liberia. The Land Commission is overseeing efforts to clarify land tenure and reform land law in Liberia.

[77] REP. LIBER., THE STATE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION INSECURITY IN LIBERIA 3 (Oct. 2010), *available at* http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp231352.pdf (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

41. **Poverty rates and income inequality**. At present, Liberia remains a low-income country and relies heavily on foreign assistance. In 2014, Liberia was ranked 174 out of 186 on the Human Development Index (HDI). This, however, represents a recent gain of eight positions, up from a ranking of 182 in 2011.[46] It is estimated that approximately 300,000 households (or 48 per cent of households nationwide) are classified as being in extreme poverty,[47] and an additional 16 per cent of households fall below the absolute poverty line and are at risk of falling into extreme poverty.[48] Nearly 85 per cent of the active labor force is engaged in vulnerable employment and does not enjoy job security or benefits such as a pension or health insurance.[49] UN Habitat has ranked Monrovia at the bottom of its City Prosperity Index and has noted that, as of 2009, 68.3 per cent of the urban Liberian population was living in slum areas.[50]

42. **Indicators on standard of living and household expenditures**. Only an estimated 9.8 per cent of the population has access to electricity[51] and only 0.5 per cent has Internet access.[52] According to the 2008 national census, ownership of many basic amenities and means of transportation was also generally quite low. Ownership of essential assets as defined by the census (such as a mattress, radio, and basic furniture) is very low, with an average national essential assets deficiency rate of approximately 85 per cent. Ownership of non-essential assets as defined by the census (such as a television, vehicle, motorbike, and cell phone) is also low, with a national non-essential assets deficiency rate of approximately 96 per cent. Nationally, 61.5 per cent of the population falls under the Unmet Basic Needs (UBN) index; in counties that are geographically isolated and have poor transport access and employment opportunities, this number is significantly higher (it is highest in Rivercess at 82 per cent, closely followed by Grand Kru at 78 per cent, and Gbarpolu and River Gee, both at 75 per cent).[53]

Table 8
Ownership of Amenities and Means of Transportation (2008)

Amenity, means of transportation	*% of urban households*	*% of rural households*	*% of all households nationally*
Vehicle	4.9	0.5	2.6
Motorcycle	4.9	1.4	3.1
Cell phone	50.9	10.1	30.0
Television	13.9	1.3	7.4
Radio	51.0	29.9	40.2
Refrigerator	3.3	0.5	1.8
Furniture	31.8	17.2	24.3
Mattress	76.1	40.1	57.7

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census (at A-9 294).

[46] United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], Human Development Reports (2011-2014).
[47] AFL *supra* note 2, at 96.
[48] *Id.*
[49] *Id.*
[50] UN HABITAT, STATE OF THE WORLD'S CITIES 2012/2013 at 123-24.
[51] Estimate for the year 2012. World Bank Development Indicators (December 2015), *available at* http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?display=default (*last accessed* Dec. 7, 2015).
[52] AFL *supra* note 2, at 12.
[53] *Id.*, 20-21.

43. The most recent assessment of the GINI coefficient (2007) place the country at 36.5.[50] On average, Liberian households reported spending 53.3% of their total expenditure on food and 46.7% on non-food expenditures such as transport (9.9%), hygiene care (6.7%), clothing (4.8%), communication (3.8%), and housing (2.0%).

44. **Employment Indicators.** Out of a total population of 3,470,008 persons, 1,804,040 (or 51.9% of the total population) are considered eligible for employment (defined as age 15 and above). Of the eligible population, 62.8% form part of the active labour force, of which 96.3% are considered employed.[51]

Table 9
Labor Market Indicators — Absolute Numbers (Persons Aged 15 and over) (2010)

Liberia	1,804,040	1,133,000	971,000	162,000	42,000
Urban areas	932,000	632,000	423,000	184,000	28,000
Rural areas	871,000	471,000	381,000	67,000	14,000
Male	849,000	561,000	488,000	52,000	14,000
Female	955,000	553,000	483,000	110,000	28,000
Greater Monrovia	569,000	390,000	290,000	81,000	19,000

Source: LISGIS 2010 Labour Force Survey (LFS).

45. Under the "relaxed" international definition of unemployment,[52] the rate of unemployment in Liberia is approximately 3.7%.[53] Nearly three-quarters of a million people are employed in the informal sector in Liberia (which includes agriculture), accounting for sixty-eight per cent of all employment in the country. Informal employment is more common in rural areas (accounting for seventy-five per cent of all rural employment) than in urban areas (where it accounts for 59.3% of all employment) and is higher among women (74.7%) than men (61.3%). Vulnerable employment, defined as persons who are working for themselves (own account workers) or who are unpaid for their own household (contributing family workers), stands at 77.9% nationally; again, it is more prevalent in rural areas (86.1%) than in urban areas (67.5%) and among women (87.4%) than men (68.3%). Under the 1986 Constitution, the Government of Liberia has an obligation to "direct its policy towards ensuring for all citizens, without discrimination, opportunities for employment and livelihood under just and humane conditions, and towards promoting safety, health, and welfare facilities in employment."[54] Implementation

[50] World Bank Development Indicators, *available at* http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?page=1&display=default (*last accessed* Dec. 7, 2015).

[51] LISGIS Labour Force Survey, *supra* note 53, at xiii.

[52] *Id.* ("The 'strict' definition of unemployment requires that a person should not have done any work in the reference period, should be available for work, and should be looking for work. This last condition has been 'relaxed' and not made a condition for being counted as unemployed. Since most people in developing countries cannot afford to remain unemployed and not do any work at all, the level of unemployment is not a good indicator of the state of the labour market. In a developing economy, it is important to look at other indicators, such as those obtained from looking at each person's status in employment.").

[53] *Id.*

[54] Liber. Const., art. 8.

on this provision is a challenge, however, given the high rates of informal employment in the country.

Table 10

Key Labor Market Indicators (2010)

	Labour force participation rate (%)	Unemployment rate (%)	Youth unemployment rate (%)	Youth unemployment rate (%)	Vulnerable employment rate (%)	Informal employment rate (%)
Liberia	62.8	37.2	60.9	3.7	77.9	68.0
Urban areas	54.9	45.1	52.0	8.5	67.5	59.3
Rural areas	71.2	28.8	69.6	2.3	86.1	75.0
Male	66.1	33.9	63.8	7.4	68.3	61.5
Female	59.9	40.1	57.5	4.1	87.5	74.7
Greater Monrovia	52.8	47.2	49.3	6.9	63.2	56.6

Source: LISGIS 2010 Labour Force Survey (LFS).

40. The most significant form of employment in Liberia is agriculture, which is also the primary source of informal and vulnerable employment, followed by wholesale or retail trade.

Table 11

Employment by Major Sectors of Activity, Including Percentage of Vulnerable Employment, and by Gender (2010)

Sector	Male	% Male in vulnerable employment	Female	% Female in vulnerable employment
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	508,000	94.1	252,000	91.9	255,000	96.2
Mining & quarrying	17,000	69.7	13,000	65.5	4,000	81.8
Manufacturing	69,000	59.6	48,000	49.4	21,000	83.7
Electricity, gas, steam, aircon	2,000	4.5	2,000	5.2	*	0.0
Construction	26,000	47.7	22,000	46.2	4,000	55.6
Wholesale or retail trade; motor repair	270,000	92.0	82,000	83.4	188,000	95.7
Transportation & storage	24,000	42.1	20,000	35.0	5,000	72.9
Accommodation & food service	28,000	81.1	9,000	66.2	20,000	87.7
Information & communication	5,0000	34.7	5,000	34.5	1,000	36.0
Finance & insurance	11,000	11.9	9,000	10.6	2,000	16.3
Professional, scientific & technical	4,000	25.4	3,000	26.4	1,000	7.4
Administration & support services	24,000	2.1	18,000	1.2	6,000	5.0
Public administration & defense	7,000	1.1	5,000	1.6	2,000	0.0
Education	40,000	3.1	27,000	2.8	12,000	4.1

Human health & social work	16,000	1.5	4,000	0.7	12,000	2.2
Arts, entertainment & recreation	9,000	0.8	2,000	0.4	7,000	1.3
Other service activities	11,000	1.0	7,000	1.3	4,000	0.7
Households as employers	4,000	0.4	2,000	0.4	2,000	0.4
Total	**1,071,000**	**78.8**	**536,000**	**68.8**	**535,000**	**88.8**

Source: LISGIS 2010 Labour Force Survey, p. 54.

47. **Labour unions.** According to the Labour Force Survey, among all paid (or salaried) employees (195,000 total, or 17.9% of the employed labour force), 20.1% (or 39,000 employees) stated that they were members of trade unions. Members of labour unions account for approximately 3.6% of the employed labour force. The Ministry of Labour has a designated Assistant Minister for Trade Union Affairs. Trade unions in Liberia are included in the Congress of National Trade Unions of Liberia (CONATUL) and the Liberia Federation of Labour Unions (LFLU). Most trade union employees in Liberia are employed in concessions.

48. **Economic impact of Ebola.** As at August of 2014, the Ebola crisis brought substantial economic damage to investment and development in the country, akin to a standstill. However, Liberia's economy has been gradually returning to a state of normality in 2015. In April 2015, the World Bank estimated Liberia's GDP to be at US $2.1b million, far below neighbouring Guinea at US $5.5b million and Sierra Leone at US $3.4 billion, where eradication of Ebola has been declared. The Liberian mining and agriculture sectors have shown signs of resilience, and 2015 GDP growth has been projected at three per cent, well below the pre-Ebola rate of 6.8 per cent but higher than the 2014 rate of zero per cent. However, due to declined revenue and increased Ebola-related expenditure, Liberia's projected fiscal deficit for 2015 is estimated at 12.8%. The World Bank notes that strong and sustained financial support from the development community will be necessary to assist Liberia in its economic recovery from the losses sustained during the Ebola crisis and to make the economy less vulnerable in the long-term.

6. Health

49. **Overview.** Since 2003, the Liberian health care sector has transitioned from a state of emergency recovery to a phase of rebuilding and development. The National Health Policy and Plan (NHPP) was developed concomitantly with the national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) to restore basic health care services following the cessation of the war and to lay the foundation for the development of many adequate and accessible health care services. Liberia has made notable progress in the area of child health care: under-five mortality rates have declined by half (from 146 in 2003 to 73 in 2014), as has the under-five prevalence of malaria (down from 66 per cent in 2006 to 32 per cent in 2011 [1]. The

[1] LISGIS Labour Force Survey, *supra* note 53, at 10.
[2] World Bank Group & University of the Economic Intervention 2014-2015 Ebola Response in Liberia: Status Update, as of 23 April 15, 2015), *available at* http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/9580406WP0Box385458B.pdf (*last accessed* May 8, 2015); World Bank Development Indicators (December 2015); ALI, *supra* note 2, at 93.

number of functional health care facilities has nearly doubled, growing from 354 in 2005[54] to nearly 700 as of 2014.[55] The number of facilities providing the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS)[56] more than doubled between 2008 and 2011, from 36 per cent in 2008 to 84 per cent in 2011.[57] Additionally, the number of health care personnel in the country increased from approximately 5,000 in 2008 to nearly 8,000 by 2011.[58]

50. Despite such achievements in the health care sector, accessibility remains an issue, with fewer options available for rural populations and those who cannot afford private health care. While 85 per cent of urban households are within one hour's walk of a health care facility, approximately 66 per cent of rural households must travel more than one hour to access a health care facility. For pregnant women and infants, this poses a particular hazard: while 77 per cent of urban deliveries are carried out by skilled practitioners, only 32 percent of rural deliveries are done so, leading to a greater prevalence of maternal and infant mortality rates in the rural areas of Liberia.

51. Additional ongoing challenges include nutrition and food security, which have a serious impact on health. More than 40 per cent of Liberian children are considered malnourished, and nearly 30 per cent of under-five deaths may be attributed at least in part to malnutrition. Malaria is also a major public health concern as it accounts for 42 per cent of all inpatient deaths and is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the country.[59] According to the WHO, the top ten causes of death in Liberia (as of 2012) are lower respiratory infections (12.2% or 4,200 people), malaria (8.4% or 2,900), tuberculosis (5.6% or 1,900), HIV/AIDS (5.6% or 1,900), stroke (5.3% or 1,800), diarrhoeal diseases (4.7% or 1,600), birth asphyxia and birth trauma (4% or 1,400), ischaemic heart disease (3.5% or 1,200), preterm birth complications (3.5% or 1,200), and maternal conditions (2.9% or 1,000). Between 2014 and 2015, Ebola was also a major cause of death, claiming the lives of at least 4,809 Liberians.[60]

52. In order to promote further development of the heath care sector, the Government of Liberia has launched the National Health and Social Welfare Policy and Plan, 2011-2021 (NHSWPP). The NHSWPP provides for greater accessibility and affordability of quality health care services for all Liberians regardless of social position or location within the country. The AFT also includes improvement of the health care sector under Pillar III ("Human Development") as a national priority that will be key to sustainable development and security in the country going forward.

53. **Public spending on health.** In line with its increased prioritization of the provision of adequate and affordable health care services, the Government of Liberia has increased public spending in the health care sector. Between Fiscal Years (FY) 2006/07 and 2013/14, the Government's overall budgetary allocation to health increased fivefold, from US $10.9 million to US $53.6 million. Per capita health expenditure has also increased since FY 2006/07, as reflected in the tables below.

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[54] AFT, *supra* note 2, at 93.

[55] MOHSW, 2014 ANNUAL REPORT 75 (2014).

[56] The BPHS prioritizes essential services in the following six areas: maternal and newborn health, child health, reproductive and adolescent health, communicable disease control, mental health, and emergency care. MOHSW, CHRISTMAS SEASON ATTENTIVE ANALYSIS REPORT 34 (July 2011).

[57] AFT, *supra* note 2, at 93.

[58] *Id.*

[59] *Id.*, 93-94.

[60] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa – Reported Cases Graphs, http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/cumulative-cases-graphs.html (*last accessed* Dec. 8, 2015).

Table 12
Public Spending on Health (FY 2006/07 – FY 2014/15)

	FY 06/07	FY 07/08	FY 08/09	FY 09/10	FY 10/11	FY 11/12	FY 12/13	FY 13/14	FY 14/15	FY 15/16
GOL budgetary allocation to health (USD millions)	10.9	18.7	22.9	27.1	59.8	49.2	54.9	53.6	78.7	72.9
Per cent of national budget to health	8.40	8.96	7.68	7.82	10.77	6.55	8.40	11.5	12.4	11.6
Per capita health expenditure, public (USD)	3.3	5.5	6.6	7.8	11	13.2	13.5	17.2	22.5	20.7

Sources: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare 2013 and 2014 Annual Reports; National Budgets FY 2014/15 – 2015/16

Table 13
Public and Private Expenditure on Health (2010-2013)

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Public expenditure on health as a % of GDP	2.7	5.1	5.2	3.6
Health expenditure per capita (current US$)	838	846	839	842
Public health expenditure (as a % of total health expenditure)	23.8	41.4	32.5	58.4

Source: World Bank Development Indicators (December 2015)

54. As part of its commitment to improve access to health care services, the Government of Liberia has pledged to allocate fifteen per cent of its national budget to the health sector, first at a 2001 meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) and subsequently at a 2006 Special Summit of the AU and the 15th Session of the Ordinary AU Assembly in 2010.[19] While it has yet to reach this benchmark, the Government of Liberia has increased funding to health care and strives to make improvements in this area for all Liberians.

55. **Provision of health care personnel and facilities.** The provision of health care personnel and facilities has been on the increase over the past several years. Between 2009 and 2010, health infrastructures increased by 20.7%, leading to a reduction in the ratio of health facilities to persons (in 2006, for example, there was one health facility per 8,000 persons; by 2010, the availability of health facilities had increased, to one health facility per 5,500 persons). According to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, approximately 470 students are currently being trained in health care delivery services in Liberia and abroad, but many more students will need to be trained and retained in-country in order to overcome the current capacity gap. As of 2012, there were 82 doctors, 308 physician assistants, 1,455 nurses, and 645 midwives to care for a population of more than 3.5 million.[20]

[19] Liberia Civil Society National Budget and Human Rights Forum, "Briefing Paper Three: To Liberia's Legislators and Cabinet Officials Responsible for Public Finance Management," at 2-3 (Jun. 27, 2013).

[20] Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention, Seventh and eighth combined periodic reports

Table 14
Distribution of Health Facilities by County and Ownership (2011)

County	Government of Liberia	Not for profit/Private for profit	NGO	Total
Bomi	20	2	2	24
Bong	32	5	1	38
Gbarpolu	14	0	0	14
Grand Bassa	21	7	2	30
Grand Cape Mount	32	0	0	32
Grand Gedeh	17	1	0	18
Grand Kru	17	0	0	17
Lofa	53	3	0	56
Margibi	18	2	14	34
Maryland	20	4	0	24
Montserrado	47	34	75	49	205
Nimba	42	12	4	2	60
Rivercess	16	1	0	17
River Gee	16	1	0	17
Sinoe	31	1	0	32
Total	**396**	**73**	**98**	**51**	**618**

(Source: MOHSW, Country Situational Analysis Report (at 24).

56. **Children's health and nutrition**. The child's right to health is enshrined in Liberian law: the Children's Law of 2011, which domesticates many key provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), provides that "[e]very child shall have the right to access all medically necessary health care"[103] as well as the right "to access adequate food, safe and clean water, and nutrition."[104] The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Internal Affairs are the lead ministries responsible under the Children's Law for the development and implementation of "programs that result in the progressive decline of malnutrition, child illnesses, and child and parental deaths."[105]

57. Liberia has made significant progress in providing immunizations to children. Between 2007 and 2013, the rate of full immunization for children aged 12-23 months rose from 39 per cent to 55 per cent.[106] However, more than 40 per cent of Liberian children suffer from malnutrition, a major contributing factor to under-five mortality (it is estimated that approximately thirty per cent of under-five deaths may be attributed to malnutrition due to its effects on physical strength and immunity).[107] Between 2009 and 2013, 60 per cent of Liberian children were considered on average to be moderately or severely underweight.

due in 2013, Liberia at 29, U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/LBR/7-8 (Apr. 10, 2014) [hereinafter "CEDAW Report"].

[103] An Act to Establish the Children's Law of Liberia, 2011, art. 3, § 8.1 (July 2011) [hereinafter "Children's Law"].

[104] *Id.* art. 3, §10.1.

[105] *Id.* art. 3, §8.2.

[106] Liberia Demographic and Health Survey [DHS] 2007, at 125; Liberia DHS 2013, at 137.

[107] AFL, *supra* note 2, at 93-94.

Forty-two per cent of Liberian children may be classified as "stunting," and three per cent are "wasting."[56]

58. **Women's health care and sexual and reproductive health**. Liberia suffers from high rates of maternal mortality, attributable to causes including post-partum hemorrhage, obstructed or prolonged labor, eclampsia, complications of unsafe abortions, and complications due to illnesses including malaria and anemia. Maternal mortality has decreased over the past several years as more skilled maternal health care personnel have been trained and deployed: between 2010 and 2012, for instance, institutional deliveries rose by 15.3 per cent.[57] The maternal mortality rate has decreased from 994 per 100,000 live births in 2009 to 640 per 100,00 live births in 2013.[58] Among Liberian women of contraceptive age, 27.7 per cent use contraception, and 31.1 per cent have unmet needs for family planning.[59]

59. The clinical and psychosocial management of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a key priority under the national health policy and the BPHS. A total of 173 health workers and 120 health providers have been trained in the clinical treatment of rape, and 325 community members from twelve different communities have been trained in the provision of psychosocial services and the referral of rape survivors to health facilities.[60] The Government of Liberia also operates a number of safe houses for survivors of SGBV that provide a comprehensive package of medical, psychosocial, and legal services.

60. **Persons with disabilities**. There are an estimated 110,260 persons living with disabilities in Liberia, totaling roughly 3.2% of the total population. There is a slightly higher proportion of male disabled persons than female disabled persons.

Table 15
Number and Percentage of Disabled Population, by Age and Sex (2008)

Age	Total disabled	2008 non-disabled	Disabled as % of total population	Female disabled	Female % of disabled	Male disabled	Male % of disabled
0-14	17,858	1,440,214	1.2	8,208	46.0	9,650	54.0
15-24	14,560	704,056	2.0	7,229	49.6	7,330	50.4
25-54	44,933	1,027,577	4.4	21,895	48.7	23,038	51.3
55-64	11,387	97,903	10.4	5,523	48.5	5,864	51.5
65+	21,513	96,598	18.2	10,843	50.4	10,670	49.6
Total	**110,260**	**3,366,348**	**3.2**	**53,698**	**48.7**	**56,562**	**51.3**

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census (at A-8.205)

[56] Stunting is defined as the "percentage of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from median height-for-age of the WHO Child Growth Standards. Wasting is defined as the "percentage of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from median weight-for-height of the WHO Child Growth Standards." UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND [UNICEF], STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 2015.

[57] CEDAW Report, *supra* note 102, at 28.

[58] UNICEF, THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN, 2010-2015.

[59] Liberia DHS 2013, *supra* note 106, at 92, 110.

[60] *Id.* 30-31.

[61] Information provided by the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Unit of the Ministry of Justice, Republic of Liberia (2015).

61. Liberia's civil war left a significant number of persons with disabilities (13,665, or more than ten per cent of Liberia's disabled population). Congenital birth defects, disease (including polio), and accidents are also leading causes of disability in Liberia. Persons with disabilities face cultural stigmatization and have below average levels of nutrition, immunization, and access to health care, education, and employment.[7] The Government of Liberia established the National Commission on Disabilities in 2005 to more adequately respond to and address the needs and challenges of persons with disabilities. Liberia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and has included provisions for persons with disabilities in its Poverty Reduction Strategy, Agenda for Transformation, and National Human Rights Action Plan. The 2011 Children's Law also specifically provides for the protection and promotion of the rights of children with disabilities.[8]

Table 16

Distribution of Disabled Population by Cause of Disability and Age (2008)

	Cause of disability										
Age	Other illness	Stroke	Visual impairment	Hearing impairment	War	Chronic illness	Common illness	Injury	Aging	Other causes	Other disorder
0-14	1,068	998	149	528	922	226	258	645	—	2,719	8,364
15-24	1,734	880	198	735	1,600	397	333	812	—	2,742	5,138
25-34	3,101	1,742	755	842	7,011	1,989	1,350	3,134	2,173	11,614	11,969
35-64	3,462	236	964	90	1,624	554	722	705	2,641	2,482	2,504
65+	517	329	651	125	2,508	864	411	816	5,085	4,066	4,476
Total	**8,882**	**4,166**	**2,144**	**2,320**	**13,665**	**4,040**	**2,654**	**6,419**	**9,899**	**23,623**	**32,448**

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census (at A-8.225)

62. **Prevalence of HIV, AIDS, and other communicable diseases.** The official prevalence of HIV and AIDS is 1.9% of the population. The epidemic has gradually increased over the years. The current number of persons living with HIV (PLHIV) in Liberia is at least 33,000 (2014). Among women and men combined, HIV prevalence is higher in urban areas (2.6%) than in rural areas (0.8%). Among urban dwellers, HIV prevalence is higher in Greater Monrovia (3.2%) than in other urban areas (1.7%). HIV prevalence is higher among women aged 15-49 who are pregnant (4.6%) than among those who are not pregnant or are not sure (1.8%). The rate of mother to child transmission is 2.6% (2011, NAC). The currently estimated tuberculosis (TB) prevalence in Liberia is 453 per 100,000 persons, which places the country at an above-average TB burden in the African region (which has an average rate of 299 per 100,000 persons). As of 2012, the World Health Organization estimated the HIV and AIDS mortality rate in Liberia to be 45.8 per 100,000 persons, a significant reduction as compared with the 2000 level of 74.8 per 100,000 persons.[9]

[7] AFL, *supra* note 2, at 130-31.

[8] Children's Law, art. 7, §4.1 et seq. ("Every child with disabilities shall have the right to enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community or town.").

[9] World Health Organization [WHO], Liberia: WHO Statistical Profile, *available at* www.who.int/gho/countries/lbr.pdf?ua=1 (*last accessed* Dec. 4, 2015).

Table 17

Rates of Infection of HIV, AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB)

Estimated Adult HIV Prevalence Rate (aged 15–49) 2013 (per 1000)	1.9%
Estimated number of people (all ages) living with HIV, 2013 (thousands) (per NAC)	13,000
Estimated number of women (aged 15+) living with HIV, 2012 (thousands) (per UNICEF, 2014)	11
Estimated number of children (aged 0 – 14) living with HIV, 2012 (thousands) (per UNICEF, 2014)	3
HIV Prevalence Among Young Males (aged 15-24), 2013 (per DHS)	0.9%
HIV Prevalence Among Young Females (aged 15-24), 2013 (per DHS)	1.4%
HIV Prevalence Among Infants (% of infants born HIV positive), 2013 (per NAC)	2.6%
TB prevalence (per 100,000) (per MOHSW)	445
TB mortality rate (per 100,000) (per MOHSW)	43

Source: Republic of Liberia, National AIDS Commission statistics (2013); Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2013 Annual Report; Liberia DHS 2013; UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2015.

63. In 2010, the Legislature passed the HIV Law,[117] which prohibits discrimination against and vilification of an individual on the basis of actual or perceived HIV status. The law also details the rights and responsibilities of all persons residing within the Republic of Liberia with regard to HIV and AIDS.

64. The National AIDS Commission (NAC) was established in 2007 to coordinate a multi-sectoral response to HIV and AIDS. The NAC is an independent body under the Office of the President of Liberia and has a mandate to coordinate HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment, and support services in the country.[118] The NAC launched, as part of its partnership mandate, the HIV and Human Rights Platform on 25 April 2013. The objective of the Platform is to promote, advocate and coordinate stakeholders' response on HIV-related human rights issues and violations that emanate from stigmatization and discrimination. The platform is chaired by the Minister of Justice and co-chaired by the Chairman of the NAC. The platform coordinates an effective national response, including enforcement of the HIV Law, promotion of the right to health, and reduction of stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV. Currently, the platform is working with the Inter-religious Council of Liberia to ensure that the religious communities are informed and engaged in the national HIV response.

65. **Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).** WASH infrastructure was heavily damaged during the war. In Monrovia alone, household connections to piped water fell by 90%. There has been some recovery in the intervening years, and as of 2010, 68% of the population had access to an improved water source. It is estimated that 62% of Liberians have access to protected water sources. However, only about one-third of Liberians have access to adequate water sources all year round. Additionally, an estimated 63% of

[117] An Act to Amend the Public Health Law, Title 33, Liberia Code of Laws Revised (1976) to create a new Chapter 18 providing for the "Control of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)" (2010).

[118] National AIDS Commission [NAC], "Mandate of the National AIDS Commission, http://www.nac.liberia.org/?content.php?sub=104&related=1&third=104&pg=sp (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).

households practice unsafe water storage practices (storing water in open containers) placing them at risk of contamination.[117]

66. Providing adequate sanitation remains an ongoing challenge. Only about 25% of households nationwide (53% of urban households and 17% of rural households) have access to improved sanitation. Lack of solid waste disposal and sewers and inadequate drainage and garbage disposal pose health and environmental hazards (particularly water contamination). In Monrovia, some progress has been made with the creation of an environmentally acceptable landfill, but no such option exists in the counties. The Republic of Liberia has recognized the need to make improvements in this area and, in 2011, launched the WASH Compact, "Water and Sanitation for All: A Global Framework for Action," to earnestly address these issues. WASH issues are also included under the AFT as a key area for sustainable development under the "Human Development" Pillar.[118]

67. **Ebola outbreak and its impact on the health care sector.** The Ebola epidemic of 2014-2015 overwhelmed the Liberian health care sector. Liberia was unprepared for a public health emergency of the epidemic's magnitude and the epidemic underscored serious weaknesses in the public health system. As of 2 December 2015, Liberia had reported a cumulative total of 10,675 suspected, probable, and confirmed cases of Ebola, of which 4,809 were fatal.[119] These numbers include at least 372 health care workers, of whom at least 180 have succumbed to the disease,[120] dealing a crippling blow to an already fragile health care system in urgent need of qualified health care workers.

68. At the time of submission of this Common Core Document, Ebola had been virtually eliminated from Liberia. Most Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) had been closed, and public and private health facilities were fully functional once more. However, the epidemic may have long-term negative impacts on the health care sector. It has been estimated that the significant loss of health care professionals may lead to a 111 per cent increase in maternal mortality and a 28 per cent increase in under-five child mortality.[121]

7. Education

69. **Overview.** Article 6 of the Liberian Constitution provides for the progressive realization of the right of equal access to education, stating that "[t]he Republic shall, because of the vital role assigned to the individual citizen under this Constitution for the social, economic and political well-being of Liberia, provide equal access to educational opportunities and facilities for all citizens to the extent of available resources." The Constitution also includes the elimination of illiteracy and the mass education of the

[117] AFT, *supra* note 2, at 13, 98.
[118] *Id.*, 98-99.
[119] CDC, *supra* note 100.
[120] Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, *Liberia Ebola Daily Sitrep No. 301 for 12th March 2015*, *available at* http://www.mohsw.gov.lr/documents/Sitrep%20301%20March%2012th%202015%20Final.pdf (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015). *N.B.* The WHO reports a lower number (83) of deceased health care personnel, defined as "doctors, nurses, and midwives." WHO, HEALTH WORKER INFECTIONS IN GUINEA, LIBERIA, AND SIERRA LEONE: A PRELIMINARY REPORT (2015), *available at* http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/health-worker-infections/en/ (*last accessed* Dec. 8, 2015).
[121] CATHRYN STREITEL, CSIS GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY CENTER, HOW DID EBOLA IMPACT MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE? (October 2015) *available at* http://csis.org/files/publication/151019_Streitel_EbolaLiberiaSierraLeone_Web.pdf (*last accessed* Dec. 8, 2015).

Liberian people as key national priorities.[124] The Ministry of Education (MOE) oversees the national educational system.

70. The New Education Reform Law of 2011 provides for free and compulsory education in public schools for primary grades (1-6) and junior secondary grades (7-9). The Children's Law of 2011 also enshrines the right of the child to education and provides for the progressive realization of a number of educational objectives critical to promoting access to education in Liberia.[125]

71. The official school age for children in Liberia is 6-11 for the primary grades and 12-17 for the secondary grades. However, due to the interruptions to education caused by the war as well as low educational efficiency (poor performance in schools and students repeating grade levels), more than half of students are overage learners.[126]

72. **Public spending on education.** According to the most recent World Bank estimates (2012), total government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 2.8%.[127] Government budgetary allocations for education are reflected in the table below.

Table 18
Government expenditure on education (FY 2012/13 – 2015/16)

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total allocation to education (USD) (millions)	76.8	79.2	65.6	81.9
Percentage of budget allocated to education	11.8	13.1	10.5	15.8
Per capita* government spending on education (USD)	21.9	21.8	18.7	24.0

Sources: National Budgets, FY 2012/13 – 2015/16.

* Calculated in relation to the entire national population and not children under 18.

73. **Literacy rates.** Literacy rates in Liberia remain low. The overall adult literacy rate (defined as persons 15 years of age and older) is 59.4%. Males have a higher rate of literacy (72.4%) than females (47.9%). In older adults, the gender disparity in literacy is much greater; however, literacy rates tend to even out among the younger strata of the population. Additionally, there is a significant gap between adult literacy rates among rural and urban areas (43.1% and 74.7%, respectively).

[124] Liber. Const. art. 6.
[125] Children's Law art. 9.
[126] Ministry of Education [MOE], *Education Statistics for the Republic of Liberia: National Statistical Booklet 2013*, 11 (2013) *available at* www.moe.gov.lr (*last accessed* Apr. 13, 2015) [hereinafter "MOE 2013 statistics"]; *see also* AFL, *supra* note 2, at 91-93.
[127] World Bank Development Indicators, December 2015.

Table 19

Literacy Rates (as a %) by Age, Sex, and Locality (2010)

	Urban			Rural			Liberia		
Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
9-14	65.2	65.9	65.6	33.0	36.8	38.5	51.8	52.5	52.1
15-24	92.5	85.6	88.8	77.7	54.9	65.7	86.4	73.0	79.3
25-34	89.5	65.3	75.5	60.7	25.3	40.7	75.3	46.1	58.7
35-54	80.2	52.2	65.8	56.3	19.6	37.1	68.0	35.2	51.0
55-64	70.4	34.5	53.0	39.1	7.0	23.5	53.5	19.5	37.0
65+	56.5	15.0	36.4	21.5	7.0	14.8	34.1	10.1	22.9
All ages 5+	78.9	65.6	71.9	52.3	31.2	41.6	65.6	49.2	57.1
All ages 15+	85.1	65.4	74.7	58.9	29.0	43.1	72.4	47.9	59.4

Source: LISGIS 2010 Labour Force Survey (at 16)

74. **Primary and secondary school net enrollment ratios (NERs).** In 2013, out of an eligible national population of 718,967 children aged 6-11, 146,696 were enrolled in school, for an NER of 20.4%. Among males, out of an eligible population of 366,549, 75,772 were enrolled, for an NER of 20.7%. Among females, out of an eligible population of 352,418, 70,924 were enrolled, for an NER of 20.1%. Overall NERs ranged from a low of 13.5% in Sinoe County and 13.6% in Rivercess County (both rural and sparsely populated) to a high 31.4% in Grand Kru County. These low NERs may indicate that many children are out of school or that they are in private or community schools (which were not included in the educational census).[125]

75. There are 776 secondary schools in Liberia, the majority of which are public (53.3%). Private schools (20.2%) and religious/mission schools (18.9%) also constitute large segments of secondary education in Liberia.[126] The average national NER for secondary students is 9%. Counties with especially low secondary NERs include Rivercess, Sinoe, and Maryland, where NER is less than 5%. The counties with the highest secondary NER rates are Bomi (23.1%), Margibi (15.3%), and Montserrado (including the Monrovia Central School System, or MCSS) (11.6%). In all 15 counties of Liberia, secondary NER is higher for males than for females; nationally, this averages out to 9.5% for males and 8.3% for females (8.3%). The overwhelming majority of secondary students are overage (94.4%).[127]

76. **Public school dropout rates.**[128] Public school dropout rates are relatively high, due to a number of factors including the high rate of students who are overage or who had little to no early childhood education and were not adequately prepared for primary education. At both the primary and secondary levels, dropout rates for male and female students are roughly comparable.[129]

[125] MOE 2013 statistics, *supra* note 126, at 36.
[126] *Id.*, 74.
[127] *Id.*, 70, 74.
[128] *N.B.* The MOE does not collect data on school attendance; only dropout rates are currently available.
[129] *Id.*

Table 20
Public Primary School Dropout Rates, by Grade and Sex (2013)

	Grade 1–2	Grade 3–4	Grade 4–5	Grade 5–6	Grade 6–7
Male	32.2%	21.3%	23.0%	23.7%	24.3%
Female	31.9%	21.3%	23.4%	25.6%	23.8%
Total	**32.1%**	**21.3%**	**23.2%**	**24.5%**	**23.7%**

Source: MOE, 2013 Statistics (at 65-66)

Table 21
Public Secondary School Dropout Rates, by Grade and Sex (2013)

	Grade 7–8	Grade 8–9	Grade 9–10	Grade 10–11	Grade 11–12
Male	14.1%	15.1%	27.8%	20.9%	20.5%
Female	12.7%	17.5%	24.4%	24.1%	21.3%
Total	**13.5%**	**16.0%**	**26.5%**	**21.8%**	**20.8%**

Source: MOE, 2013 Statistics (at 101-102)

77. **Gender parity in education.** Gender parity among student enrollment declines significantly at the secondary level. Females constitute fewer than 50% of public secondary enrollment in all 15 counties of Liberia. Enrollment rates are lowest in Sinoe (30.0%) and Rivercess (34.1%), which are rural and sparsely populated, and highest in Montserrado County (44.0%), where there are far greater educational opportunities.

Table 22
Public Secondary School Students by County and Sex (2013)

County	Grade 10 students	Grade 10 male students	% Male students	Grade 10 female students	% Female students
Bomi	2,277	1,305	57.3	972	42.7
Bong	7,029	4,425	63.0	2,604	37.0
Gbarpolu	1,224	698	57.0	526	43.0
Grand Bassa	788	481	61.0	307	39.0
Grand Cape Mount	1,965	1,177	59.9	788	40.1
Grand Gedeh	3,140	1,956	62.3	1,184	37.7
Grand Kru	1,798	1,159	64.5	639	35.5
Lofa	7,004	4,484	64.0	2,520	36.0
Margibi	4,808	2,703	56.2	2,105	43.8
Maryland	2,996	1,921	64.1	1,075	35.9
Mc SS	7,525	4,330	57.5	3,195	42.5
Montserrado	9,630	5,392	56.0	4,238	44.0
Nimba	13,007	7,643	58.8	5,364	41.2
Rivercess	610	402	65.9	208	34.1
River Gee	1,666	1,070	64.2	596	35.8
Sinoe	1,131	792	70.0	339	30.0
National	66,598	39,938	60.0	26,660	40.0

Source: MOE, 2013 Statistics (at 95)

78. **Teacher training, gender distribution, and student-teacher ratios (STRs).** Liberia is in need of more qualified teachers and a greater gender balance among teachers at both the primary and secondary levels. Currently, only 54.3% of primary school teachers have received formal training from a teacher-training institute, while 33.5% have received no training at all.[77] At the secondary level, a greater percentage of teachers are trained (approximately 71%), however more than one-quarter of secondary school teachers have not received teacher training (27.2%).[78]

79. The average national STR for primary schools is 23.8. This rate is slightly higher for government-run schools (24.8) than non-government schools (21.6). The primary STR ranges from a low of 17.7 in Sinoe County to a high of 35.1 in Grand Bassa County (35.1).[79] The STR for secondary schools is lower on average than primary schools, with a national average of 17.2 (17.6 for government schools and 16.8 for non-government schools).[80]

80. Teachers at all levels of education in Liberia are overwhelmingly male: 88% of primary school teachers are male, while more than 95% of secondary school teachers are male. The Republic of Liberia recognizes that this is unsustainable and is taking steps to recruit, train, and retain more qualified female teachers through initiatives such as the Liberia Teacher Training Programme (LTTP).

Table 23

Number and Gender Distribution of Public Primary School Teachers and Student-Teacher Ratio, by County (2013)

County	Total # of Teachers	Total # of Male Teachers	Male Teachers (%)	Total # of Female Teachers	Female Teachers (%)	Student-Teacher Ratio
Bomi	279	251	90.0	28	10.0	32.9
Bong	1,280	1,134	88.6	146	11.4	23.1
Gbarpolu	357	340	95.2	17	4.8	28.0
Grand Bassa	361	326	90.3	35	9.7	40.8
Grand Cape Mount	389	358	92.0	31	8.0	31.5
Grand Gedeh	509	451	88.6	58	11.4	25.2
Grand Kru	487	468	96.1	19	3.9	20.7
Lofa	1,324	1,252	94.6	72	5.4	23.5
Margibi	440	394	89.5	46	10.5	31.7
Maryland	432	359	83.1	73	16.9	27.3
MCSS*	411	261	63.5	150	36.5	28.5
Montserrado	925	732	79.1	193	20.9	24.5
Nimba	2,396	2,057	85.9	339	14.1	23.2
Rivercess	366	347	94.8	19	5.2	39.3
River Gee	410	380	92.7	30	7.3	19.8
Sinoe	486	443	91.2	43	8.2	17.5
National	10,852	9,553	88.0	1,299	12.0	24.8

Source: MOE 2013 Statistics (at 60). * N.B. MCSS refers to the Monrovia Consolidated School System

[77] *Id.* 44
[78] *Id.* 77
[79] *Id.* 47
[80] *Id.* 80

Table 24
Number and Gender Distribution of all Secondary School Teachers (Public and Private) and Student-Teacher Ratio, by County (2013)

County	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Bomi	158	153	96.8	5	3.2	24.7
Bong	579	558	96.4	21	3.6	14.1
Gbarpolu	100	96	96.0	4	4.0	13.3
Grand Bassa	182	177	97.3	5	2.7	25.9
Grand Cape Mount	144	138	95.8	6	4.2	14.7
Grand Gedeh	257	242	94.2	15	5.8	15.6
Grand Kru	216	212	98.1	4	1.9	9.0
Lofa	506	500	98.8	6	1.2	18.8
Margibi	518	482	93.1	36	6.9	19.0
Maryland	231	223	96.5	8	3.5	22.8
MONTSERRADO	1,238	1,225	99.0	13	1.0	13.0
Montserrado	2,538	2,389	94.1	149	5.9	18.9
Nimba	1,227	1,163	94.8	64	5.2	17.1
Rivercess	52	52	100.0	0	0.0	10.4
River Gee	74	71	95.9	3	4.1	23.7
Sinoe	177	172	97.2	5	2.8	15.8
National	7,397	6,851	95.2	546	4.8	17.2

Source: MOE 2013 Statistics (at 75-80)

81. **Access to education for rural and urban households.** As indicated in the table below, nearly two-thirds of urban households are within twenty minutes' travel time to the nearest primary school. Conversely, less than half of rural households are located within twenty minutes' travel time of a primary school, and nearly 20% of rural students are required to travel 80 minutes or more to reach a primary school.

Table 25
Travel Time to Primary School, by Percentage of Households and Locality (2008)

	[illegible]		
Time to Primary School	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Less than 20 minutes	64.4%	48.4%	56.2%
20-39 minutes	21.3%	14.7%	17.9%
40-59 minutes	6.1%	8.0%	7.1%
60-79 minutes	2.8%	7.4%	5.2%
80 or more minutes	2.7%	19.5%	11.2%
Not stated	2.7%	1.9%	2.3%

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census (at A-9.287)

82. **Persons with disabilities and access to education**. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) face additional challenges, including physical, logistical, and cultural barriers, in attempting to access their right to education in Liberia. Building codes do not mandate accessibility for PWDs; existing buildings rarely provide adequate access; and retrofitting buildings is often prohibitively expensive. Moreover, there are very few special education teachers and facilities. PWDs also face significant levels of stigmatization and discrimination.[126] Consequently, the proportion of PWDs enrolled in school is quite low. At the national level, 0.6% of primary students have a disability (0.6% male, 0.5% female), and only 0.4% of secondary students have a disability.[127] These numbers do not reflect the national proportion of disabled persons within the population (5.2% overall).

83. Moreover, as illustrated in the table below, there are significant gender disparities in literacy and access to education among all but the youngest subsets of the population. The overall literacy rates for female PWDs, for example, stands at 29.3%, while the overall literacy rate for male PWDs is 53.8%. More than 70% of female PWDs in Liberia have never attended school (while 46.5% of male PWDs have never attended school). While some of these disparities represent historical discrimination, and there has been some improvement in literacy rates and access to education in recent years, the Republic of Liberia recognizes that there is a need for significant improvement in this area and has committed its support to improving opportunities for PWDs through national policy initiatives including the AFT.[128]

Table 26

Access to Education and Literacy Rates for Persons with Disabilities, Ages 10 and Above, by Sex and Age Range (2008)

Age range	*Never attended school (%)*			*Completed school (%)*			*Dropped out of school (%)*			*Currently attending school (%)*			*Literacy rate (%)*		
	M	*F*	*Bi*	*M*	*F*	*Bi*	*M*	*F*	*Bi*	*M*	*F*	*Bi*	*M*	*F*	*Bi*
10-14	34.2	36.2	35.1	2.3	2.7	2.5	3.5	3.2	3.4	60.0	57.9	59.0	56.7	55.9	56.4
15-19	32.8	39.9	36.1	2.6	2.3	2.5	7.8	10.2	8.9	56.9	47.6	52.5	66.0	59.0	62.7
20-24	34.5	49.3	42.1	6.2	5.0	5.5	18.4	17.8	18.1	41.0	28.0	34.3	66.3	50.6	58.2
25-29	40.0	59.7	49.8	11.3	7.2	9.2	27.5	19.6	23.6	21.2	13.5	17.4	60.7	40.0	50.4
30-34	41.0	61.4	51.1	14.2	8.8	11.5	33.5	21.6	27.6	11.2	8.2	9.7	59.9	37.8	48.9
35-39	39.9	66.6	53.3	17.5	9.1	13.3	36.4	20.2	28.2	6.2	4.1	5.2	61.5	34.1	47.7
40-44	34.0	68.1	50.7	26.1	11.3	18.9	35.9	18.2	27.2	4.1	2.4	3.3	66.9	32.3	50.0
45-49	35.8	72.6	53.3	27.8	10.4	19.6	32.9	15.0	24.4	3.4	2.0	2.7	65.3	27.6	47.4
50-54	38.8	78.0	56.8	28.5	8.3	19.2	30.1	12.3	21.9	2.6	1.4	2.0	62.2	22.2	43.8
55-59	43.8	84.6	61.8	24.9	5.8	16.5	29.6	8.7	20.4	1.7	0.9	1.3	57.8	15.9	39.3
60-64	58.4	90.8	75.3	16.9	3.9	10.1	23.6	4.6	13.7	1.1	0.7	0.9	43.3	10.0	25.7
65+	75.3	93.7	84.6	8.7	2.4	5.5	15.9	3.1	9.1	0.8	0.7	0.7	26.3	6.5	16.3
Total	**46.5**	**70.2**	**58.1**	**14.6**	**5.6**	**10.4**	**23.3**	**11.8**	**17.7**	**15.7**	**12.0**	**13.9**	**53.8**	**29.3**	**41.8**

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census (at 227)

[126] AFT, *supra* note 2, at 131

[127] MOE 2013 statistics, *supra* note 126, at 40, 73

[128] *See, e.g.*, AFT, *supra* note 2, at 130-32

B. Constitutional, political, and legal structure

1. Constitutional structure

83. **Overview.** Liberia is a republic with a democratically elected president and a bicameral legislature composed of a Senate and House of Representatives. The 1986 Constitution serves as the highest law in the land, replacing the 1847 Constitution which was suspended following the 1980 coup.

85. The 1986 Constitution is currently undergoing a review under the auspices of the Constitution Review Committee (CRC). Following consultations held in all 15 counties of Liberia and with the Liberian diaspora, the CRC convened a national conference in April 2015 for the consideration of proposed constitutional amendments. In August 2015, the CRC forwarded its final report of the national conference to the President of Liberia. The report included 25 proposed amendments to be considered by the Legislature for a national referendum. The President expressed her support for 19 of these, including provisions for the rights of women and persons with disabilities, and for the abolition of race-based citizenship. The President has submitted her recommendations to the Legislature for consideration. It is expected that the Legislature will put these proposed amendments to a national vote of referendum in accordance with Article 91 of the Constitution in 2016 or 2017.

86. The Government of Liberia is comprised of three branches: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial, each explicitly provided for in the 1986 Constitution. The Constitution assures the separation of powers by explicitly providing that no one may concurrently hold office in two branches of government.[10]

87. **Executive Function.** Chapter VI of the 1986 Constitution provides for the executive function of government. The executive function is vested in the President, who serves as Head of State, Head of Government, and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The President is elected by universal adult suffrage for a term of six years and may not serve more than two terms.[11] The President has the power to nominate and, with the approval of the Senate, appoint Cabinet ministers, consuls, ambassadors, county superintendants, justices of the Supreme Court, lower court judges, and high ranking members of the military and the Liberia National Police. The President is also empowered to conduct the foreign affairs of the nation and may conclude treaties, conventions, and other international agreements with the concurrence of a majority of both houses of the legislature.

88. At present, the Liberian Cabinet is comprised of the following ministers and heads of government agencies:

- Executive Director, General Services Agency
- Executive Director, National Investment Commission
- Minister of Agriculture
- Minister of Commerce and Industry
- Minister of Culture, Information, and Tourism
- Minister of Education
- Minister of Finance and Development Planning

[10] Liber. Const. art. 3.
[11] Liber. Const. art. 50.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection
- Minister of Health and Social Welfare
- Minister of Internal Affairs
- Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
- Minister of Labor
- Minister of Lands, Mines, and Energy
- Minister of National Defense
- Minister of Posts and Telecommunications
- Minister of Public Works
- Minister of State for Presidential Affairs
- Minister of State Without Portfolio
- Minister of Transport
- Minister of Youth and Sports

89. **Legislature.** Article 29 of the Constitution establishes a bicameral legislature comprised of a Senate and a House of Representatives, both of which must pass all legislation before it may be submitted to the President for signature into law.

90. In accordance with article 34 of the Constitution, the legislature has the authority to:

- Create new county boundaries and other political subdivisions, and adjust existing political boundaries;
- Provide for the security of the Republic;
- Provide for the common defense, declare war and authorize the Executive to conclude peace, raise and support the armed forces and create rules governing the armed forces;
- Levy taxes and other duties;
- Constitute courts inferior to the Supreme Court;
- Approve treaties and other international conventions;
- Regulate Liberia's international trade and commerce;
- Enact election law; and
- Establish and enact laws related to the criminal code and other areas.

91. The Senate is comprised of 30 members. Two Senators are elected from each county by eligible voters in their respective counties. Senators serve for a period of nine years.[45] The Senate is presided over by the President Pro Tempore, who is elected by members of the Senate and serves for a term of six years.[46]

92. The House of Representatives is comprised of 73 members, who represent fifteen electoral districts (counties) and are elected by eligible voters in their respective counties.

[45] Liber. Const. art. 45
[46] Liber. Const. art. 47

Representatives serve for a period of six years.[142] The House is presided over by a Speaker, who is elected by his or her fellow Representatives for a term of six years.[143]

93. **Judiciary.** Chapter VII of the Constitution governs the Judiciary. The Supreme Court has the power of judicial review and may declare any treaties, laws, regulations, or other provisions or instruments that are inconsistent with the Constitution null and void to the extent of the inconsistency.[144] It is the final arbiter of constitutional matters and is the court of original jurisdiction for all cases involving ambassadors, ministers, or cases in which a country is a party. Judgments of the Supreme Court are final and binding and may not be subject to review by other branches of government.[145]

94. The Supreme Court is comprised of one Chief Justice and four Associate Justices. Justices are nominated by the President and appointed with the consent of the Senate.[146] They may be removed through impeachment or mandatory retirement (age 70),[147] and are entitled to civil and criminal immunity for opinions and statements made in the course of their work as justices.[148]

95. Under article 65, the judiciary is also vested in "such subordinate courts as the Legislature shall from time to time establish." Both the Supreme Court and lower courts must apply both statutory and customary laws in accordance with any applicable provisions established by the Legislature.[149] Lower court judges are appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.[150] All judges retain their position on condition of "good behavior." Judges may be removed following impeachment and conviction by the Legislature on the grounds of "proven misconduct, gross breach of duty, inability to perform the functions of their offices, or conviction in a court of law for treason, bribery, or other infamous crimes."[151]

2. Political Structure

96. **Multi-party democracy.** Chapter VIII ("Political Parties and Elections") of the Constitution establishes Liberia as a democracy[152] and provides for a fair and democratic political structure, including the prohibition of any "laws, regulations, decrees, or other measures which might have the effect of creating a one-party state."[153] The Constitution also prohibits the registration of political parties whose aim is to "impair or abolish the free democratic society of Liberia or to endanger the existence of the Republic,"[154] or which use physical force or coercion in promoting their objectives or interests (or give rise to reasonable suspicion thereof).[155]

[142] Liber. Const. art. 48.
[143] Liber. Const. art. 49.
[144] Liber. Const. art. 2.
[145] Liber. Const. arts. 65-66.
[146] Liber. Const. art. 67.
[147] Liber. Const. art. 72(b).
[148] Liber. Const. art. 73.
[149] Liber. Const. art. 65.
[150] Liber. Const. art. 69.
[151] Liber. Const. art. 71.
[152] Liber. Const. art. 77(a).
[153] Liber. Const. art. 77(a).
[154] Liber. Const. art. 80(a).
[155] Liber. Const. art. 80(b).

97. **Enfranchisement and voter registration and eligibility.** Universal adult suffrage was introduced in 1946 under President Tubman.[84] All Liberian citizens who have attained the age of 18 are eligible to vote and have the right to be registered as a voter in elections. Between January and February 2011, a national voter registration exercise was held in anticipation of the national elections to be held in October. In order to facilitate the registration process, 1,780 voter registration centers were established throughout the country. By Election Day 2011, there were 1,798,930 registered voters, of whom 878,482 (or 49%) were female and 920,448 (or 51%) were male.[85] At the time of submission of this Common Core Document, there were 1,879,531 Liberians registered to vote.[86]

98. Noncitizens do not have the right to vote. The Legislature may enact laws prohibiting certain categories of Liberians from becoming members of political parties.[87] All Liberian citizens have the right to run for office and to canvass for votes if not disqualified from doing so under other Constitutional provisions.[88]

99. **National elections.** All elections of public officers are determined by an absolute majority of votes. If there is no absolute majority, then a run-off election of the two candidates with the most votes must be held to determine a victor.[89] As prescribed by the Constitution, national presidential and legislative elections are held on the second Tuesday of October in each election year.[90] Since the end of the civil conflict, there have been three successful national elections (in 2005, 2011 and 2014); domestic and international observers have generally qualified these elections as free and fair. However, since 1986, only the 2011 presidential and legislative elections were held within the constitutionally prescribed schedule. Both the 2005 (presidential and legislative) elections and the 2014 (senatorial) elections were held outside the constitutionally prescribed schedule. The latter, which were due to be held in October 2014 at the height of the Ebola crisis, were postponed until December of that year in an effort to reduce the risk of the disease's transmission. Political rallies and other gatherings were also restricted in the lead-up to the December 2014 elections for public health reasons. Voter turnout was low (roughly 25% of registered voters), due largely, it is believed, to fears of Ebola. Ten out of fifteen incumbents were defeated, an indication that voters in general were looking for a change in representation at the Senatorial level.

Table 27
Voter Turnout, December 2014 Special Senatorial Elections

County	Voter Turnout	Total Registered Voters	Winner	Incumbent Defeated? (Yes/No)
Bomi	20,155	38.4	Morris Gato Sayinnah (UP)	Yes
Bong	41,573	23.2	Jewel C. Howard-Taylor (NPP)	No
Gbarpolu	12,645	30.1	Daniel F. Saatchin Sr. (ANC)	Yes

[84] *See infra* § II.A.2.(a).
[85] National Elections Commission [NEC], 2011 ANNUAL REPORT 28, *available at* www.nec.gov.lr (*last accessed* Nov. 23, 2015).
[86] National Elections Commission data.
[87] Liber. Const. art. 77(b).
[88] Liber. Const. art. 81.
[89] Liber. Const. art. 83(b).
[90] Liber. Const. art. 83(a).

County				
Grand Bassa		Jonathan C. Kapeh		
	16,151	23.5	(LP)	Yes
Grand Cape Mount		Samuel G.		
	23,458	38.2	Sherman (LP)	Yes
Grand Gedeh		J. Marshall Dennis		Incumbent
	18,168	33.4	(UDP)	did not run
Grand Kru		Albert T. Chea		Incumbent
	13,910	37.4	(NDC)	did not run
Lofa		Varpilah (H. Varpi)		
	42,529	31.6	Weh	Yes
Margibi		Jacob K. Dimnwaki		
	27,181	20.7	(PUP)	Yes
Maryland		J. Chesleigh Brown		
	16,824	31.2	(UDP)	Yes
Montserrado		George M. Wade		
	136,910	20.1	(LP)	Yes
Nimba		Prince S. Johnson		
	54,148	24.6	(NPP)	Yes
Rivercess		Daniel B. Ziah		
	9,156	29.1	(LP)	Yes
River Gee		Commany B.		Incumbent
	9,726	31.1	Wureh (LP)	did not run
Sinoe		Gabriel Mason		
	14,156	32.5	Zaweh (LP)	Yes
Total	**479,936**	**25.2**		**10 defeated**

Source: National Elections Commission of Liberia (2015).

100. Voter turnout was comparatively high during the first round of elections in 2011 with an average of 71.6% of registered voters availing their rights nationwide. Voter turnout declined significantly at the November presidential runoff (contest between Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Winston Tubman, following Tubman's public withdrawal of the elections and call to boycott the results. Sirleaf subsequently won the November runoff election handily with more than 90% of the vote.

Table 28
Voter Turnout, 2011 National Presidential and Legislative Elections

County				
Bomi	19,883	75.1	22,478	47.1
Bong	124,422	73.1	63,963	38.4
Gbarpolu	20,254	69.1	27,105	49.3
Grand Bassa	85,399	65.5	46,279	74.4
Grand Cape Mount	61,526	71.4	37,489	60.6
Grand Gedeh	53,862	63.1	27,030	34.5
Grand Kru	39,724	80.9	36,139	56.4
Lofa	100,499	64.6	81,018	47.6

County	Total Registered Voters (2015 Register)	Total Registered Voters	Total Registered and Voted Voters	% of Registered Voters Who Voted	% of Registered Voters
			8 November Runoff		
Maryland	31,868	66.5	15,589	32.5	
Montserrado	472,550	75.0	214,690	34.1	
Nimba	174,775	75.9	120,683	52.4	
Rivercess	19,159	67.1	7,449	26.1	
River Gee	19,160	65.2	10,422	35.4	
Sinoe	24,765	65.3	12,747	33.6	
National	1,288,716	71.6	694,412	38.6	

Source: National Elections Commission of Liberia (2015).

Tables 29-30

2011 Presidential Election Results (National Tally)

Results: October 11 Elections

Candidate	Political Party	Votes Received	% of Votes
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	Unity Party (UP)	530,920	43.9
Winston A. Tubman	Congress for Democratic Change (CDC)	394,370	32.7
Prince Y. Johnson	National Union for Democratic Progress (NUDP)	139,786	11.6

Source: National Elections Commission of Liberia (2015).

Results: November 8 Runoff Elections

Candidate	Political Party	Votes Received	% of Votes
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	Unity Party (UP)	607,618	90.7
Winston A. Tubman	Congress for Democratic Change (CDC)	62,267	9.3

Source: National Elections Commission of Liberia (2015).

101 **Voting irregularities.** The National Elections Commission (NEC) coordinates and administers all elections in the country and is responsible for receiving and reviewing complaints of voting irregularities. Challenges may be filed with the NEC no later than seven days after the election results have been announced.[99] The NEC must conduct an impartial investigation into all complaints and render a decision within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. The NEC may either dismiss a claim or nullify an election result.[100] A political party or candidate affected by such a decision may submit an appeal to the Supreme Court, but it must do so within seven days of the NEC's decision.[101] During the course of the 2014 elections, there were 19 complaints submitted to the NEC.[102] In 2011, a

[99] Liberia Code art. 8[xx].

[100] Liberia Code art. 8[xx].

[101] Id.

[102] This is an unofficial tally. At the time of writing, NEC had not released further details on the number and types of complaint dispositions, etc.

total of 91 complaints were received before, during and after the elections. Ten complaints were determined to be urgent and a recount was ordered prior to the announcement of final voting results. Of these ten recounts, in four cases, voting results were corrected. There were six cases of alleged electoral offenses or misconduct filed against NEC staff.[99]

102. **Sub-national elections and appointments**. In accordance with the Constitution, the President of Liberia appoints one superintendent to administer each county.[100] The Constitution also mandates that paramount, clan, and town chiefs be elected within their localities to serve for a term of six years. These elections have not been held since 1985, however, due to a combination of civil conflict and budgetary constraints.[101] In the absence of municipal elections, the Supreme Court has ruled in favor of allowing the President to appoint "acting mayors" to fulfill some of these duties until the national budget allows for municipal elections.[102]

103. **Number of recognized political parties at the national level**. There are currently fifteen parties recognized at the national level, the most well represented of which are President Sirleaf's Unity Party (UP), which holds 33% of the seats in the Senate and more than 35% of the seats in the House, and the opposition party Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), which holds approximately 13% of both the Senate and the House. Articles 79-82 of the Constitution include provisions for the establishment of political parties, which must be registered with the NEC and meet certain requirements before being recognized at the national level.

Table 31

Distribution of Senate Seats by Political Party (Following December 2014 Elections)

Party	No. of Seats	% Seats
Unity Party (UP)	9	33
Congress for Democratic Change (CDC)*	4	13
National Patriotic Party (NPP)	4	13
Liberty Party (LP)	3	10
National Democratic Coalition (NDC)	2	6
Alliance for Peace and Democracy (APD)	1	3
Alternative National Congress (ANC)	1	3
Liberia Destiny Party (LDP)	1	3
National Union for Democratic Progress (NUDP)	1	3
People Unification Party (PUP)	1	3
Independent	1	3
Total	30	–

* One member of the CDC – Geraldine Doe Sherriff- resigned from the party in 2014

[99] NEC – supra note 150.
[100] Liber. Const. arts. XI, Sec. 1.
[101] Liber. Const. art. 56(b).
[102] Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism [MIC AT]. "About the Republic of Liberia – Counties and Districts." http://www.micatliberia.com/index.php/home/republic-of-liberia/about-liberia/81-about-the-republic-of-liberia.html?showall=&start=3 (last accessed 25 Nov. 2015).

Table 32
Distribution of House of Representatives Seats by Political Party (Following 2011 Elections)

Political Party	*No. of Seats*	*Seat Total*
Unity Party (UP)	26	35.6
Congress for Democratic Change (CDC)	9	12.3
Liberty Party (LP)	6	8.2
National Union for Democratic Progress (NUDP)	6	8.2
National Democratic Coalition (NDC)*	5	6.9
Alliance for Peace and Democracy (APD)	3	4.1
National Patriotic Party (NPP)	3	4.1
Movement for Progressive Change (MPC)	2	2.7
Liberia Destiny Party (LDP)	1	1.4
Liberia Transformation Party (LTP)	1	1.4
National Reformation Party (NRP)	1	1.4
Independent	10	13.7
Total	**73**	–

104. **Gender composition of candidates and elected officials.** The proportion of female candidates and elected female officials remains low in Liberia. For all electoral races in 2011, only 104 out of 909 (or roughly 11%) of candidates were female. Of these, 11 out of 99 (or 11%) were candidates for the Senate, 90 out of 794 (again, roughly 11%) were running for the House, and 3 out of 16 (or 19%) were contesting the Presidency.[97] Following the 2011 elections, women held 16.7% of Senate seats and 12.5% of House seats.[98] As reflected in the table below, these numbers have since declined.

Table 33
Gender Composition of the Legislature (January 2015)

Chamber	*No. Of Females*	*% of Total (Female)*	*No. of Males*	*% of Total (Male)*
Senate	2	10.0	27	90.0
House	8	12.3	65	87.7
Total	**11**	**10.7**	**92**	**89.3**

105. The NEC created a Gender Section prior to the 2011 elections to promote and increase women's participation at all levels of government in Liberia.[99] A draft Gender Equity Bill has also been submitted to the Legislature, which would establish a minimum threshold level of female representation in government.

106. **Gender composition of executive branch officials.** As of November 2015, 6 Cabinet members were female. Women held the following Cabinet positions: Minister of Agriculture; Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection; Minister of Health and Social Welfare; Minister of Transport; Director-General of the General Services Agency;

97 NEC 2011 Annual Report, *supra* note 159, at 21.
98 *Id.* 26.
99 *Id.* 26.

and Chair of the National Investment Commission. Additionally, approximately one-third of county superintendants (who are appointed by the President) are female.

107. **Media ownership and access to information**. All media organizations must register with the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism (MICAT), which oversees media licensing.

108. The Liberian media is heavily centered in and around the capital city of Monrovia. There are 37 private print media institutions (newspapers) registered with MICAT. Newspapers may be distributed to the counties by taxi transport (arranged by the Ministry of Transport) or, occasionally, on UNMIL flights to more sparsely populated and remote regions. The government newspaper, the *New Liberia Newspaper*, is published three times per week. It focuses on developmental projects and programs and is distributed to government ministries and agencies.[176]

109. Radio is a popular medium in Liberia. There are 21 privately owned radio stations registered with MICAT, several of which have religious affiliations. UNMIL operates its own radio station and generally provides free access for government entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that wish to use the radio for public information campaigns. The Government of Liberia operates one radio station (ELBC radio). The Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA) is responsible for issuing licenses for the operation of radio stations in the country.

110. There are five television stations, of which one is state-owned (the Liberia Broadcasting System, or LBS). Access to television is quite limited for most Liberians; however, only 7.4% of households nationwide own a television.[177]

111. The Liberia News Agency (LINA) is the news agency of the Government of Liberia. It collects and distributes information on government programs and policies. LINA has offices in six counties to ensure that information is disseminated to rural populations outside of Monrovia.

112. The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) represents a large number of journalists working in Liberia and advocates for the rights of journalists.

113. Access to various forms of media in Liberia is still relatively low. It is estimated that as of 2014, 5.4% of Liberians had access to the Internet.[178] Ownership of radios and television is also comparatively low, with significant disparities between urban and rural households, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 34
Household Ownership of Major Media, by Locality (2008)

Medium	Urban	Rural	Total
Radio	166,627 (51.0%)	162,548 (29.9%)	329,175 (40.2%)
Television	326,986 (45,314 (13.9%))	345,535 (4,459 (1.3%))	672,268 (49,773 (7.4%))

Source: LISGIS 2008 National Population and Housing Census.

[176] MICAT.
[177] LISGIS (USAID/S, *supra* note 2).
[178] World Bank Development Indicators (December 2015).

3. Legal Structure

114. The Liberian legal system combines elements of the common law (particularly American common law) and customary law. The judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court, which is headed by a Chief Justice and four Associate Justices. The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction over constitutional matters and is the appellate court for circuit courts, which are the next highest level of courts. The legislature may also establish other courts from time to time, the most recent example being the establishment of Criminal Court "E" for the prosecution of crimes of sexual and gender-based violence.[29]

115. Liberia has a unitary form of government; all courts may apply both formal (or statutory) and customary laws. All formal courts are included in the national system and fall under the supervision of the Supreme Court. A system of customary law is recognized in the Judiciary Law (1972). The traditional justice system is governed by the Revised Rules and Regulations Governing the Hinterland of Liberia (2000) and is particularly prominent in the rural areas.

116. The primary sources of law include the Constitution, the Revised Civil Procedure Law, the Model Penal Code, and the Criminal Procedure Code. Secondary sources of law include the Liberian Law Reports.

117. With regard to international law, Liberia is a dualist system, and therefore treaties must be domesticated through the national legislature in order to have the force of law in Liberia.

118. There are fifteen circuit courts in Liberia (one for each county), each headed by a circuit court judge. Under the Judiciary Law, the circuit courts exercise original jurisdiction over all cases to which another court is not expressly given exclusive original jurisdiction by constitutional or statutory provisions.

119. Magistrates courts are headed by stipendiary magistrates (who, in accordance with Liberian law, should be qualified attorneys) and two associate magistrates (who do not need to be qualified attorneys). Magistrates courts have jurisdiction over minor civil and criminal matters that do not require a jury trial. Matters that require a jury trial must be referred to the circuit courts once preliminary hearings have been completed. There are approximately 80 magistrates courts in Liberia. Justices of the peace courts may handle a limited number of minor civil and criminal cases.

120. There are also a number of specialized courts in Liberia. These include the juvenile court (which operates in Monrovia only); criminal court E (also in Monrovia only), which has jurisdiction over cases of sexual and gender-based violence; and other specialized courts devoted to tax and labor law.

121. The county attorney is the lead prosecutor in his or her respective county. There are, thus, fifteen county attorneys in the country. Additional prosecutors and city solicitors may be assigned to courts as needed or available.

122. The right to legal counsel, regardless of ability to pay, is enshrined in the Constitution. Article 21(i) provides that the government shall provide free legal aid to indigent defendants. At present, there are twenty-nine public defenders deployed throughout the country to represent clients who cannot afford to pay for legal services.

123. There is only one law school in Liberia, the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law at the University of Liberia in Monrovia, which graduates only a few dozen students each year, leading to a severe shortage of qualified lawyers in the country. The James A.A.

[29] Liber. Const. art. 34(e).

Pierre Institute provides legal training to improve the standards of legal professional development in the country. There are also two major legal professional associations, the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) and the Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia (AFELL), which promote professional development and sponsor initiatives in areas such as the rule of law, access to justice, law reform, and human rights in the country.

4. Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations

124. The National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCL) is an umbrella organization representing the interests of CSOs in Liberia. In 2012, a census of CSOs nationwide was conducted under the auspices of the National CSO Advisory Committee180, finding that there were a total of 1,452 CSOs registered in Liberia. The greatest number of CSOs are in Montserrado county (172, or 11.85%), followed closely by Margibi (163, or 11.23%), Grand Bassa (118, or 8.13%), River Gee (116, or 7.99%), and Lofa (113, or 7.78%).

125. Any organization wishing to gain recognition as an NGO must apply to the Liberia Business Registry, which is operated under the auspices of the Ministries of Commerce, Foreign Affairs, and Finance and Development Planning. The latter is responsible for accrediting NGOs in Liberia.

5. Indicators on Crime and the Administration of Justice

126. **Pre-trial detention**. Liberia has an extremely high rate of pre-trial detention due principally to a lack of capacity in the court system. The country has made some improvements in reducing pre-trial detention over the past several years, in particular through the introduction of the Magistrates Sitting Program (MSP, also known as the "fasts track court"). Between 2009, when the program was introduced, and early 2014, the rate of pre-trial detention decreased from 87% to 72%. The MSP is only operational in Montserrado County at the Monrovia Central Prison where approximately half of Liberia's roughly 1,600 inmates are held. A pre-trial detention taskforce, chaired by the Ministry of Justice, is charged with addressing the issue of the high rate of pre-trial detention. During the Ebola crisis, pre-trial detention rates dropped significantly following directives issued by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (calling for the administration of alternatives to incarceration, where possible) and the Solicitor General (prohibiting the issuance of writs of petty arrest in minor cases) in an attempt to reduce prison overcrowding and the attendant risk of increased Ebola transmission.

Table 35
Average National Rate of Pre-trial Detention (2010-2014)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. of pre-trial detainees (average)	1196	1175	1350	1446	1101
No. of convicted inmates (average)	232	307	350	406	507
Total prison population (average)	1428	1482	1760	1851	1810
Pre-trial detainees (as a % of total inmates)	84%	79%	76%	78%	73%

Sources: Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Ministry of Justice; and Corrections Advisory Unit, UNMIL.

127. Incidence of death in custody is low: out of a total prison population of approximately 1,600 inmates, only 8 deaths were reported in 2014.

180 The National CSO Advisory Committee led to the establishment of the NCSCL.

Table 36
Incidence of Deaths in Custody (2010-2014)

Year	Total Number	Male	Female	Sentenced[1]	Detainees	Adults	Juveniles
2010	9	9	0	–	–	9	0
2011	21	21	0	–	–	21	0
2012	11	11	0	–	–	11	0
2013	15	14	1	7	8	15	0
2014	8	8	0	4	4	8	0
Total	**64**	**63**	**1**	**11**	**12**	**64**	**0**

Sources: Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Ministry of Justice and Corrections Advisory Unit, UNMIL.

128. **Judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and other legal professionals.** There is a severe shortage of qualified and trained legal professionals in Liberia due to the challenges arising out of the civil war, when much of the professional class fled the country. There are currently only 69 prosecutors and 29 public defenders deployed to address the needs of a population of nearly four million. This has led to a significant backlog of docketed cases. Moreover, female representation among the judiciary is low. Recruiting, training, and retaining qualified legal professionals are priorities under the Agenda for Transformation (AFT) and will remain an ongoing challenge for the administration of justice in the short term.

Table 37
Number and Gender Distribution of Judges and Magistrates (2014)

Supreme Court Justices		
Male	*Female*	*Total*
3 (including Chief Justice) (60%)[1]	2 (40%)	5
Circuit Court Judges		
Male	*Female*	*Total*
18 (78%)	5 (22%)	23
Specialized Court Judges		
Male	*Female*	*Total*
35 (90%)	4 (10%)	39
Stipendiary Magistrates		
Male	*Female*	*Total*
91 (98%)	2 (2%)	93

[1] *N.B.* Prior to 2013, data is not available on the status (pre-trial detainee Vs. convicted/sentenced) of those inmates who died in custody.

Associate Magistrates		
Male	Female	Total
205 (97%)	7 (3%)	212

All Judges and Magistrates		
Male	Female	Total
352 (95%)	20 (5%)	372

* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

Sources: Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court of Liberia, and Office of the Solicitor General, Ministry of Justice

Table 38
Number of Cases Handled by Public Defenders (2014)

Court term	Number of cases	Average number of cases handled per public defender*
February	222	7.65
May	144	4.97
August	326	11.24
November	pending	–
Total	**692 (plus those pending)**	**23.86**

Source: Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court of Liberia

Table 39
Status of Cases Docketed Before All Circuit Courts in Liberia (2011–2012)

Year	# of cases docketed	# of cases carried over*	% of cases carried over	# of cases disposed	% of cases disposed	# of cases pending	% of cases pending
2011	2,118	756	44 (36%)	533 (70%)	641 (30%)	1,477	70%
2012	2,131	676	48 (7%)	823 (72%)	546 (43%)	1,308	61%

Sources: Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court of Liberia, and USAID/Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Rule of Law

* After cases carried over from one term to another are deducted

Table 40
Proportion of National Budget Allocated to the Judiciary (2010–2015)

Fiscal Year	Allocated Budget to the Judiciary	Total National Budget	Percentage of Total Budget
2010/2011	$47,000,000	$2,087,261	2.18
2011/2012	$16,480,000	$2,715,853	2.46
2012/2013	$23,090,415	$2,251,310	1.82
2013/2014	$53,882,000	$1,980,408	2.80
2014/2015	$49,625,000	$1,313,767	2.93

Source: Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court of Liberia

129. **Indicators on the police and security personnel.** The Government of Liberia is expected take over full responsibility for its own security from UNMIL by 30 June 2016. Public expenditure on the police and security personnel is expected to increase accordingly from previous years. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15, the Government's budgetary allocation to Security and the Rule of Law totaled US$83.7 million (13.2 per cent of the national budget, or US$23.9 per capita), and in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015/16 it totaled US$98.9 million (15.9 per cent of the national budget, or US$28.3 per capita).

130. According to the 2014 Annual Report of the Liberia National Police (LNP), there are 4,809 total police personnel, of which 3,972 are male (82.6%) and 837 are female (17.4%). The projected strength of the LNP by 2016 is 8,000.

Table 42
Police Deployment by Gender and Rank (2014)

Rank	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Inspector General	1	0	1
Deputy Inspector General	2	0	2
Commissioner	5	0	5
Deputy Commissioner	29	3	32
Assistant Commissioner	36	8	44
Chief Superintendant	63	5	68
Superintendant	93	9	102
Chief Inspector	139	7	146
Inspector	190	19	209
Sergeant	262	45	307
Corporal	155	25	180
Patrolman	2,997	716	3,713
Total	**3,972 (82.6%)**	**837 (17.4%)**	**4,809**

Source: LNP 2014 Annual Report

Table 43
Police Deployment by County (2014)

County	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Bomi	55	7	62
Bong	91	10	101
Gbarpolu	30	5	35
Grand Bassa	73	16	89
Grand Cape Mount	27	12	39
Grand Kru	21	1	28
Grand Gedeh	56	10	66
Lofa	84	5	89
Margibi	128	55	183
Maryland	44	11	55
Montserrado	3,114	690	3,804

County			
Nimba	142	27	169
River Gee	34	7	41
River Cess	85	4	89
Sinoe	38	6	44
Total	**3,972**	**837**	**4,809**

Source: LNP 2014 Annual Report.

131. Rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are high in Liberia. The vast majority of cases go unreported and their true frequency is greater than the data indicators provided below. The Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS) of the LNP is responsible for the intake, management, and investigation of reported SGBV cases. There are currently sixty-one WACPS units throughout the country.

Table 14
All SGBV crimes reported to WACPS (2010–2014)

Year	Rape	Gang Rape	Sexual Assault	Aggravated Assault	Sexual Exploitation	Voluntary Sodomy*	Involuntary Sodomy**	Incest	Attempted Rape	Attempted Gang Rape
2010	4	390	14	103	72	4	2	11	1	2
2011	0	268	13	40	42	5	1	27	1	1
2012	2	508	22	19	46	8	2	19	2	0
2013	0	260	23	24	47	9	0	34	4	8
2014	0	285	28	25	58	9	1	32	9	1

Source: WACPS CSD/LNP.

* SGBV Voluntary Sodomy is illegal in Liberia and therefore is included as an SGBV crime reportable to the LNP.

** Not identical to international legal definition of sexual harassment.

Table 15
All SGBV crimes reported to WACPS by case disposition (2010–2014)

Year	Cases	Arrests	Convictions	Acquittals
2010	568	1,419	432	1,419
2011	500	828	478	1,014
2012	683	936	715	1,135
2013	484	1,013	91	1,256
2014	496	1,126	424	1,440

Source: Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS) and CSD/LNP.

Table 46
National Incidence of Violent vs. Non-violent Crimes Reported (2010-2014)

Year	Violent Crimes	Non-violent Crimes	Total Crimes Reported
2010	3,862	8,381	12,243
2011	4,685	10,158	14,843
2012	4,134	9,613	13,747
2013	5,594	10,934	16,528
2014	5,458	11,127	16,585

Source: LNP/2014 Annual Report

Table 47
Summary of Crimes Reported by Case Disposition (2010-2014)

Year	Cases	Cleared	Pending	Unfounded	Total
2010	5,512	6,188	1,998	439	14,138
2011	5,710	6,177	2,869	87	14,843
2012	5,577	5,184	2,787	229	13,747
2013	6,824	5,412	6,190	93	16,528
2014	6,246	3,910	6,734	96	16,585

Source: LNP/2014 Annual Report

132. **Accountability for police misconduct and human rights oversight within the LNP.** The LNP has two divisions empowered to deal with police misconduct and human rights issues. The Professional Standards Division (PSD) of the LNP is comprised of three sections, the Internal Affairs Section, the Inspection and Control Section, and the Public Complaints Cell, and is charged with monitoring and controlling police personnel behavior, investigating complaints of misconduct, and recommending disciplinary action when needed. In 2013, the PSD received 615 complaints alleging police misconduct; in 2014, this number rose to 987.

133. Since 2014, a Human Rights Monitoring and Training Unit has been integrated into the operations of the PSD to identify and address human rights concerns involving LNP officers. Through this Unit, the PSD also supports the strengthening of human rights training at the police academy by developing human rights scenarios drawn from actual LNP cases.

III. General framework for the promotion and protection of human rights

A. Acceptance of international human rights norms

1. Ratification of main international human rights instruments

134. In furtherance of its commitment to protecting human rights and upholding the rule of law, the Republic of Liberia has ratified or acceded to seven of the core United Nations human rights treaties and two of their related protocols. These are:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (2004);

- The International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (2004)
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1984)
- The Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) (2004)
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1993)
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (1976)[a]
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2012)
- The Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR-OP-II) (2005)
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OP-CAT) (2004)

135. The Republic of Liberia has signed, but not yet ratified, the following instruments:

- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) (2004)
- The First Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2004)
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (2004)
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2004)
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography (2004)
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (2004)
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007)

136. Liberia has not yet signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED).

137. **Reservations and Declarations.** Liberia has become a party to the aforementioned human rights instruments without any reservations, declarations, derogations, restrictions, or limitations.

2. Ratification of Other United Nations Human Rights and Related Treaties

138. Liberia is a party to the following UN human rights and human rights-related treaties:

- The UN Convention Against Corruption (2005)
- The UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2004) and Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air (2004) and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and

[a] Not including Declaration Article 14, which Liberia has not ratified.

Children, Supplementing the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2004);

- The U.N. Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (2005);
- The U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1950);
- The Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1964);
- The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1964) and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1980);
- The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1976);
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2004);
- The 1926 Slavery Convention (1955).

139. Liberia has signed but not ratified the Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1950).

B. Ratification of other relevant international conventions

140. Liberia has been a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) since 1919 and has ratified the following key ILO conventions with implications for human rights:

- The Forced Labour Convention of 1930 (No. 29) (1931);
- The Labor Inspection Convention of 1947 (No. 81) (2003);
- The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention of 1948 (No. 87) (1962);
- The Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98) (1962);
- The Abolition of Forced Labour Convention of 1957 (No. 105) (1962);
- The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention of 1958 (No. 111) (1959);
- The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999 (No. 182) (2003).

141. Additionally, two ILO conventions are currently under consideration for ratification by the national legislature, the Minimum Wage-Fixing Convention of 1970 (No. 131) and the Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951 (No. 100).

142. Liberia has also ratified the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1962). Liberia is not a member state of the Hague Conference and has only ratified one of its conventions, the Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents.

143. Liberia has ratified the key conventions of international humanitarian law, including:

- The Hague Convention (XI) on the Restrictions of the Right of Capture, 1907 (1914);
- The Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 (I-IV) (1954);
- The Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) (1988);

- The Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) (1977)
- The Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (1997)
- The Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008) (2010)

C. Ratification of regional human rights conventions

141. [illegible] the following regional human rights conventions:

- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)
- The Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights (2014)[1]
- The 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)
- The Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1974)
- African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003)
- The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007)
- The Second Revised Economic Agreement of Cartagena (1996)
- The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007)
- The OAU Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa (1977) (1985)

D. Membership in regional and international organizations

142. [illegible] the following regional and international organizations:

- United Nations (UN)
- African Union (AU)
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Mano River Union (MRU)
- Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)
- African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP)

[1] [illegible] signed the Protocol on 16 May 2014; ratification is pending.

I. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level

1. Protection of Rights in the Constitution and National Legislation; Derogation Provisions

[10] **General Principles of National Policy and Fundamental Rights.** Chapter II of the 1986 Constitution ("General Principles of National Policy") enumerates a number of principles that "shall be fundamental in the governance of the Republic and shall serve as guidelines in the formulation of legislative, executive and administrative directives, policy-making and their execution,"[1] with implications for human rights, namely:

- The strengthening of national integration and unity and the promotion of wide civic participation in government (art. 5(a));
- The preservation, protection and promotion of Liberian traditional culture, giving consideration to the need to ensure that traditional values are "compatible with public policy and national progress" in the context of the evolving needs of Liberian society (art. 5(b));
- The elimination of tribalism, nepotism and abuse of power including the misuse of government resources, nepotism and corruption (art. 5(c));
- The progressive realization of equal access to educational opportunities and facilities in accordance with available resources, placing emphasis on the mass education of all Liberians and the elimination of illiteracy (art. 6);
- The management of the national economy and natural resources "in such manner as shall ensure the maximum feasible participation of Liberian citizens under conditions of equality as to advance the general welfare of the Liberian people and the economic development of Liberia" (art. 7);
- The provision of opportunities for employment and livelihood without discrimination, "under just and humane conditions," and the promotion of "safety, health and welfare facilities in employment" (art. 8);
- The promotion of bilateral and regional cooperation and participation in regional organizations "aimed at the cultural, social, political and economic development of the peoples of Africa and other nations of the world" (art. 91); and
- The publication and dissemination of the national Constitution and public awareness and education of its provisions (art. 10).

[11] **Fundamental rights under the Constitution.** In Chapter III ("Fundamental Rights"), the Constitution provides that "[a]ll persons are born equally free and independent and have certain natural, inherent and inalienable rights ... subject to such qualifications as provided for in this Constitution,"[2] namely:

- The rights to life, liberty, and security of the person (art. 11(a));
- The right to be free from discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, sex, creed, place of origin, or political opinion (art. 11(b));
- The right to equality before the law and equal protection under the law (art. 11(c));

[1] Liberian Constitution, art. 5.
[2] Liberian Constitution, art. 11(a).

- The right to be free from slavery or forced labor (subject to the exceptions described previously in the Declaration) (art. 12);
- The right to freedom of movement within the country and to and out of the country (subject to the exceptions described previously in the Declaration) (art. 13);
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion (subject to the exceptions described previously) and the prohibition of the establishment of a state religion in conformity with the principle of separation between church and state (art. 14);
- The rights to freedom of expression and freedom of the press (including state interference by the government with personal communications) (subject to the exceptions described previously) (art. 15);
- The right of the public to information about the government (art. 15);
- The right to privacy (art. 16);
- The rights to assembly and freedom of association (including the right to associate for the formation of political parties, trade unions, and trade organizations) (art. 17);
- The right to be free from discrimination (i.e., with any classification of the basis of sex, creed, religion, ethnicity, color, or origin or political affiliation) and the right to equal remuneration for equal work (art. 18);
- The right of citizens not to be subject to ex post facto laws (art. 19);
- The right to due process (with the presumption of innocence) (art. 20);
- The right not to be subject to [illegible] (art. 21);
- The right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures (art. 21(6));
- The rights of detained persons (including the right to be informed of the charges against them, to have access to legal counsel (and, if the accused cannot afford legal counsel, entitlement to free legal aid), to be released on bail (except for cases of capital offenses), to be charged or released within 48 hours, to file a writ of habeas corpus, to a fair and speedy trial (including the right to confront witnesses against the accused), and to be free from torture and inhuman treatment (art. 21));
- The right to own property, subject to the exceptions described earlier (art. 22) and with the exclusion of minerals and certain boundary under the land, sea and waterways (which are the property of the government) (art. 22);
- The right of inheritance, including for spouses of both domestic and customary marriages and their children (art. 23);
- Prohibition of impairment by government of the obligation of contract (art. 24); and
- The right to contest the constitutionality of judgments and other court orders and to seek redress for damages arising therefrom in a court of law (art. 2).

148. **Derogation provisions and emergency powers.** Under Chapter IX of the Constitution, the President may, in consultation with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, declare a state of emergency. Per article 80(b), pursuant to the declaration of a state of emergency, the President may suspend or affect certain rights, freedoms and guarantees contained in the Constitution and exercise such other emergency powers as may be necessary and appropriate to take care of the emergency, subject, however, to the limitations contained in this Chapter. Per 85(b), a state of emergency may be declared only where there is a threat or outbreak of war or where there is civil unrest affecting the existence, security or well-being of the Republic.

amounting to a clear and present danger."[147] Moreover, the government may not suspend, abrogate, or amend the Constitution during a state of emergency.[148]

149. Chapter IX does not enumerate which rights are non-derogable, with the exception of article 87(b), which guarantees the right to the writ of habeas corpus at all times. Some provisions under Chapter III ("Fundamental Rights") explicitly state that certain rights may be suspended or curtailed during a state of emergency, or for other relevant cause. These include:

- Article 12, abolishing slavery and forced labor, but providing for labor "reasonably required" pursuant to a court order, military service, and "work or service which forms part of normal civil obligations or service exacted in cases of emergency or calamity threatening the life or well-being of the community";
- Article 13, providing for freedom of movement, subject to "the safeguarding of public security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others";
- Article 14, providing for freedom of thought, conscience, and religion and the enjoyment thereof, "except as may be required by law to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights or freedoms of others";
- Article 15, providing for freedom of expression, which may "not be curtailed, restricted or abridged by government save during an emergency declared in accordance with this Constitution" or is "limited . . . by judicial action in proceedings grounded in defamation or invasion of the rights of privacy and publicity or in the commercial aspect of expression in deception, false advertising and copyright infringement";
- Article 20, providing that no one may be deprived of life, liberty, security of the person, property, or other privileges or rights "except as the outcome of a hearing, judgment consistent with the provisions laid down in this Constitution and in accordance with due process of law"; and
- Article 24, providing that the right to own property is subject to government expropriation where "the security of the nation in the event of armed conflict or where the public health or safety are endangered or for any other public purpose," provided that the reasons for such expropriation are provided, that the property owner is given appropriate compensation and that such compensation may be challenged by the property owner in a court of law, and that the property owner is given first right of refusal to reacquire the property in case the government ceases to use it for the public interest.

150. If the President wishes to declare a state of emergency, he or she must, within seven days of declaring a state of emergency, inform the legislature of the specific rights he or she wishes to suspend or curtail, and to articulate the justification for his or her decision to declare a state of emergency. Both houses of the legislature must uphold the declaration by a two-thirds vote, or the declaration will be considered null and void.[149]

151. In August of 2014, President Sirleaf invoked the Constitution's public health and safety provisions to declare a ninety-day state of emergency in response to the burgeoning Ebola crisis, temporarily suspending fundamental rights under articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 24 of the Constitution. The state of emergency was allowed to expire in November

[147] Liber. Const. art. 87(a).
[148] Liber. Const. art. 88.

2014, and no Constitutional rights are suspended at the time of submission of the Common Core Document.

2. Human Rights Treaties Incorporated into the National Legal System

152. Liberia has passed a number of laws incorporating the provisions of international human rights instruments into the domestic legal system, including the Gang Rape law establishing Criminal Court "E" and the SGBV Unit of the MOJ (domesticating provisions of CEDAW); the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (domesticating provisions of ICCPR, CEDAW, and CRC); the Freedom of Information Act (domesticating provisions of ICCPR); the Children's Law (domesticating provisions of CRC); and the New Education Reform Act (domesticating provisions of CRC and ICESCR). The Decent Work Bill has passed the House and, if passed by the Senate, will domesticate some provisions of the ICESCR relevant to labor rights and the right to an adequate standard of living.

153. A number of bills are currently in the legislature that, if passed, will domesticate additional human rights obligations. These include An Act to Prohibit and Prevent Torture and Ill-Treatment in Liberia (domesticating CAT); the Domestic Violence Act (domesticating provisions of CRC and CEDAW); the Gender Equality & Politics Act (domesticating provisions of CEDAW); and the Bill to Repeal All Repressive Laws (aiming at the repeal of statutes passed by the Doe regime for suppressing freedom of expression and freedom of the press (domesticating provisions of ICCPR).

3. Judicial, Administrative, and Other Authorities Having Competence Affecting Human Rights Matters and the Extent of Such Competence

154. The INCHR has the principal competence on human rights matters in Liberia.

155. The Human Rights Unit of the MOJ may investigate cases of alleged human rights abuses by police and security personnel and other actors and conducts monitoring of prisons throughout the country. The HRU may report its findings to the Minister of Justice/Attorney General and recommend that legal and/or remedial action be taken.

156. The Ministry of Labor has a child labor secretariat and an anti-human trafficking taskforce to address issues of forced labor.

157. The SGBV Units of the MOJ and MOGSCP as well as the WACPS of the LNP have the authority to investigate cases of SGBV and recommend cases for prosecution at criminal court E.

158. In the legislature, there are two committees with competence to address human rights. In the Senate, the Committee on the Judiciary, Human Rights, Claims and Petitions has a mandate to receive all legislative messages, memoranda and other matters with regard to "the administration of justice in the Republic, constitutional amendment and constitutional matters, elections laws and guidelines, the courts and judges of the Republic, prisoners, prison houses and prison reforms, repeal, amendment, revision and codification of statutes, and other legal matters ...." In the House of Representatives, the Committee on Human and Civil Rights is mandated to receive "all messages and other documents from the President, civil society groups, local and international human and civil rights groups and all other matters relating to human and civil rights."[20]

[20] Legislature of the Republic of Liberia. www.legislature.gov.lr

4. Provisions of Human Rights Instruments That Have Been or May Be Invoked or Enforced by the Courts, Tribunals, or Administrative Authorities

159. Court records are limited in Liberia (there is no regularly published court reporter, for instance); therefore, it is difficult to assess which provisions of human rights instruments may be or have been invoked by the courts, tribunals, and other administrative authorities.[1]

5. Remedies Available to an Individual for Violation of Rights; Systems of Reparation, Compensation, and/or Rehabilitation for Victims

160. There is no specialized court in Liberia to address lawsuits seeking damages for human rights violations per se. There is a separate civil law court in Monrovia, but in all other counties the circuit courts function as both criminal and civil courts and may handle cases of human rights violations that simultaneously constitute civil and criminal offenses.

161. A specialized criminal court (Criminal Court "E") was established in 2008 exclusively to handle cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The SGBV Unit of the Ministry of Justice operates a number of safe houses throughout the country and provides comprehensive medical and psychosocial counseling to survivors of SGBV.

162. The Ministry of Labor has a grievance mechanism for workers' rights issues and a Labor Inspection Department that investigates allegations of labor law violations. There is also a specialized labor law court in Monrovia.

163. In accordance with the TRC's recommendations, in 2012 the INCHR launched the "Palava Hut" mechanism, which allows communities at the town/village level to air grievances and seek reconciliation with regard to human rights violations committed during the civil war. The Palava Hut mechanism does not, however, offer any formal legal remedy to victims.

164. The proposed Anti-Torture Bill currently under consideration by the national legislature provides for financial and legal remedies for victims of torture.

6. Institutions Responsible for Overseeing Implementation of Human Rights

165. On the part of government, the ministry chiefly responsible for overseeing implementation of human rights is the Ministry of Justice, though nearly all government ministries have a role to play in human rights implementation under the NHRAP. The Ministry of Gender, for instance, is a lead ministry on implementation of the rights of women and children. The Law Reform Commission is also responsible for overseeing implementation of human rights through its advocacy for national law reform in the legislature and its role as an advisor on ratification, domestication, and implementation of regional and international human rights instruments.

166. As an independent institution, the INCHR also has a key role in monitoring the government's progress on implementation of human rights and advocating for improvement in the government's promotion and protection of human rights.

167. A number of additional government institutions have a mandate to advance the rights of vulnerable groups. These include the National AIDS Commission (NAC), the

[1] While there is no regularly published court reporter, the Liberia Legal Information Institute maintains a comprehensive and free database containing legal information for Liberia, including access to opinions from Liberia's Supreme Court; codified and uncodified legislation; agency regulations; concession agreements; court rules; treaties; and an array of other Liberian law resources.

National Commission on Disabilities (NCD), and the Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC).

F. Acceptance of jurisdiction of international and regional human rights courts

168. Liberia has ratified the Rome Statute and accepts the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Liberia also accepts compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice with reservations. Additionally, Liberia has accepted the jurisdiction of two regional courts. Individuals may appeal cases, including human rights cases, to the Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In 2014, Liberia domestically ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and has therefore accepted jurisdiction of the Court.

169. At the time of submission of this Common Core Document, no cases involving Liberia were pending at any of the international or regional courts exercising jurisdiction over the country.

G. Framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level

1. National Legislature

170. There are two committees in the national legislature with a mandate to oversee matters related to human rights, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Human Rights, Claims and Petitions, and the House Committee on Human and Civil Rights. These committees are responsible for reviewing and promoting passage of legislation to domesticate and implement Liberia's regional and international human rights obligations. They are also responsible for advising the Legislature on ratification of additional human rights instruments. In addition to these committees, the Liberia Legislative Staff Human Rights Association was launched in 2010 by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. The Association is comprised of staff members (who are not Senators or Representatives) and works within the legislature to review legislation with an eye to identifying human rights issues and concerns and to advocate for the promotion of human rights legislation.

2. National Human Rights Action Plan for Liberia (NHRAP) and Other Human Rights Action Plans

171. The National Human Rights Action Plan for Liberia (NHRAP) was launched in December 2013 and is a broad and comprehensive strategy for the implementation of Liberia's human rights obligations. The NHRAP incorporates recommendations made during the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) as well as specific provisions of human rights instruments to which Liberia is a party and parses them into thematic and specific "key objectives" to be undertaken by various "agents of change" identified through a national validation conference. It includes provisions for treaty reporting, domestication and ratification, civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, and the rights of vulnerable groups. A Steering Committee (SCNHRAP) co-chaired by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and composed of representatives from government ministries and agencies and members of civil society organizations meets bi-monthly to coordinate the plan's implementation. There are also a number of sub-committees under the SCNHRAP, including the technical sub-committee on treaty

reporting, which contributed to the data collection and drafting processes of the second national report to the UPR.

172. In addition to the NHRAP, Liberia has launched a number of other human rights action plans, including the National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Action Plan for UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and a National Action Plan in the Fight Against the Trafficking of Human Beings.

3. National Human Rights Institutions

173. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) was established on October 28, 2010, pursuant to the stipulations of the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, with the appointment of seven commissioners, including one chairperson. Initially, four male and three female commissioners were appointed. Civil society was widely involved with the nominations process. A committee of experts, comprised primarily of representatives from civil society organizations, was charged with the processes of vetting and short-listing commissioners.

174. The INCHR has a broad mandate to receive complaints of human rights violations, to monitor and report on human rights conditions, to propose policy and legislation promoting the harmonization of national legislation and practices with international human rights instruments, and to assist in human rights education and public awareness initiatives, among other responsibilities. The INCHR has trained and deployed fourteen human rights monitors in eight out of fifteen counties to monitor and investigate human rights issues including prison conditions, excessive pre-trial detention, and cases of harmful traditional practices. Pursuant to the launching of the Reconciliation Roadmap, the INCHR has also been tasked with the responsibility of administering the Palava Hut Program, a community-based reconciliation process. However, due to operational challenges, including insufficient funding, the INCHR has not been able to operate optimally since its establishment in 2010.

175. The Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of Justice is the Secretariat of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) and has a mandate to receive and investigate complaints of human rights violations, to conduct human rights monitoring of persons, and to coordinate the Ministry's responses to international and regional human rights mechanisms, among other duties. The Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection is empowered to receive complaints of human rights violations as well and has a mandate to develop and support policies and activities that promote and protect the rights and well-being of women and children. Human Rights Units have also been established within the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and the Liberia National Police (LNP) to integrate human rights education and awareness in the security sector.

4. Dissemination of Human Rights Instruments

176. Under its constitutive act, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) has a mandate to promote the publication and dissemination of human rights instruments throughout the country.[39] Due to resource constraints, however, the INCHR has been unable to adequately publish and disseminate the core international human rights instruments. The Ministry of Education and the Human Rights and Protection Section (HRPS) of UNMIL have partnered to create human rights educational materials to be distributed to all public schools in Liberia. These materials include the full texts of the core

[39] An Act to Establish the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, art. IV, §§12.1(1)(2005).

international human rights instruments with annotations and exercises to foster student comprehension on human rights.

5. Raising Human Rights Awareness Among Public Officials and Other Professionals

177. Human rights education remains a priority for the Government of Liberia, but capacity is limited. HRPSU/UNMIL has provided technical support in training members of the Liberia National Police (LNP), the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), the INCHR, and other government officers on human rights monitoring, human rights and business, and integrating a human rights-based approach in their operations. Human rights trainings have also been conducted on the subject of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) for nurses, medical and social workers as well as members of the women's and children's protection Section (WACPS) of the LNP responsible for the intake and management of SGBV cases.

6. Promotion of Human Rights Awareness Through Educational Programs and Government-sponsored Public Information

178. The Government of Liberia has sponsored a number of high-profile human rights public awareness and sensitization campaigns, particularly in the area of SGBV, to change the negative perceptions of women in Liberian society – a root cause of the high levels of SGBV in Liberia. In 2013, President Sirleaf launched the National Anti-Rape Campaign which condemned rape and SGBV through radio programs, community forums, dialogues with traditional leaders, and other activities and also educated the public on the rape law. In the past, the MOGCSP, UN agencies, and civil society partners have used radio dramas, talk shows, and spot messages to attempt to change social attitudes about violence and discrimination against women. Public awareness campaigns have also been conducted to increase women's access to justice through better understanding of the law and the legal options available to them. The Law Reform Commission and other partners have, for instance, disseminated simplified versions of the rape and inheritance laws in an effort to make them accessible to a wider spectrum of Liberian women. Beginning in 2013, the Human Rights Unit and the Child Justice Section of the Ministry of Justice have also collaborated to promote understanding of the rights of juveniles in contact with the law. The Child Justice Section operates "diversion clubs" in a number of schools to educate juveniles on their rights and to promote awareness of alternatives to detention. The Ministry of Education has also partnered in the past with HRPSU/UNMIL to create a human rights curriculum for schools and has disseminated human rights educational materials.

7. Promotion of Human Rights Awareness Through the Mass Media

179. The Ministry of Gender has utilized the media, particularly the radio, to combat harmful stereotypes of women and to publicize information related to women's human rights, in particular with relation to the Anti-Rape Campaign. The Ministry of Justice has also utilized the radio to promote awareness of the rights of juveniles in contact with the law. Additionally, the INCHR has a mandate to promote awareness of human rights issues through the media and has participated in a number of media initiatives, including public awareness and sensitization on the Pafava Hut program.

II. Ongoing challenges to implementation of human rights

180. Liberia has continued to face a variety of political, economic, and social challenges inherent to its status as a post-conflict nation. These challenges include endemic corruption and a culture of impunity, high illiteracy and unemployment rates, low professional development, a lack of awareness of human rights among the society at large, the continued existence of dual justice systems and discriminatory laws and practices, a lack of public

fund in the judiciary and law enforcement, often leading to mob violence; residual delays in domesticating regional and international human rights norms; inadequate human and financial resources to fully implement crucial human rights initiatives; and a still-fragile security situation. Most recently, the outbreak of Ebola posed the most significant threat to national security and economic development since the civil war.

I. Reporting process at the national level

1. National Coordinating Structures for Treaty Reporting

181. Historically, Liberia has lagged behind in its regional and international treaty reporting obligations, due to factors including political instability, civil war, a failure of political will, and a lack of human and technical resources. In recent years, however, Liberia has renewed its commitment to human rights treaty reporting. The country is currently in compliance with its reporting obligations under CEDAW, for instance, having submitted reports in both 2008 and 2014. Liberia is also up to date with its reporting obligations under the CRC. Additionally, Liberia has participated in the first and second cycles of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2011 and 2015, respectively. Liberia also submitted its first-ever National Report to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in 2012, and in May of 2014, a Liberian delegation, headed by the Acting Minister of Justice presented the report at the 55th Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Luanda, Angola.

182. While the Republic of Liberia is pleased to note these achievements, it nonetheless acknowledges that it must address its remaining treaty reporting obligations. At the time of submission of this Common Core Document, all reports (initial and periodic) for the ICCPR, ICESCR, CERD, CRPD, and CAT are outstanding. Recognizing the need for a coordinated, sustainable mechanism for treaty reporting, as well as a strategy for the ratification and domestication of international and regional human rights instruments, in 2014 the Government of Liberia developed the National Strategy for Meeting Regional and International Human Rights Treaty Obligations. The National Strategy proposes the creation of a National Body on Treaty Obligations, chaired by the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, to oversee coordination of treaty reporting and other treaty-based obligations. The proposed National Body will be comprised of two human rights focal persons from relevant line ministries and agencies of government, at least one of whom shall be at the level of deputy or assistant minister, and who shall be responsible for providing relevant information and input from their respective ministries and agencies. The proposed secretariat of the National Body is the Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of Justice. The National Strategy also includes a proposed timeline for completion of treaty reports based on national priorities, and recommends the ratification of additional human rights instruments, including the ICRMW, the ICPPED, and the remaining Optional Protocols of the ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, and the CRPD.

183. At present, data collection and drafting of national reports to treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council are coordinated under the Steering Committee of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) through the NHRAP secretariat, the Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of Justice. Liberia's national reports under CEDAW and CRC were coordinated by the MOGCSP due to the Ministry's subject matter expertise in the areas of women's and children's rights.

2. Participation of Departments, Institutions, and Officials at National, Regional, and Local Levels of Governance

184. During the data collection and drafting processes, information and inputs are collected from a wide variety of government and civil society actors as well as members of

the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) through a participatory process. Once a report is drafted, the lead ministries responsible for the report, drafting a validation conference is held to solicit feedback on the document and to create ownership among government, civil society, and the INCHR on the progress of the document. The three inputs are incorporated into the draft, a final document is submitted to the Ministers of Justice and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for their review. National reports must be submitted for review to the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before they may be forwarded on to the relevant human rights treaty committee. Comments received are shared with the legislature as part of the consultative process. The report is then sent to be shared with or approved by the Executive before the way to submission. The Government of Liberia strives to include representatives from all of the counties during the report consultation and validation processes, and has conducted consultations in every county of Liberia during the drafting of the national report in the first cycle of the UPR in 2011. The Government fully intended to report this process in 2014 during the drafting of the national report in the second cycle, but was prevented from doing so by the outbreak of Ebola which severely hampered the ability of civil society to travel, hold meetings and travel within the country.

185. To promote effective participation in the consultation of human rights treaty reporting, the Ministry of Justice is currently developing an updated stakeholder map of local persons in a number of key government ministries and institutions including the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Finance and Development Planning, Internal Affairs, Gender, Children and Social Protection, Health and Social Welfare, Mines, Labor, Lands, Mines and Energy, and Youth and Sports. Local persons have also been solicited from government agencies including the Governance Commission, the Law Reform Commission, the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission, the AIDS Commission, and the National Commission on Disabilities, and the legislative branches of government including the Judiciary, the legislature, as well as the law enforcement and security sectors.

186. In order to foster improved understanding of and participation in the human rights reporting processes (including the UPR), the HRPS UNMIL, in collaboration with the Human Rights Unit (HRU) of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), organized a national human rights treaty reporting workshop held in December 2015 for representatives of the Government, civil society and the INCHR. This workshop also provided an opportunity for consultation and discussion of the proposed National Steering Committee (NSC) and its terms of reference. It is hoped that trainings on treaty reporting followed by the creation/expansion of human rights focal persons as described in the preceding paragraph.

3. Follow-up to Concluding Observations of Human Rights Treaty Bodies

187. The recommendations issued by the Human Rights Council following the first cycle of the UPR were the basis of Liberia's National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP), which was widely disseminated among government and civil society partners and the INCHR. Currently, the Steering Committee of the NHRAP (the NHRAP SC) is working to follow up with the "agents of change" appointed to take the lead in following and implementation of these recommendations. The NCNHRAP plans to disseminate the recommendations made during the second cycle of the UPR in May 2016 and to incorporate them into the existing structure of the NHRAP.